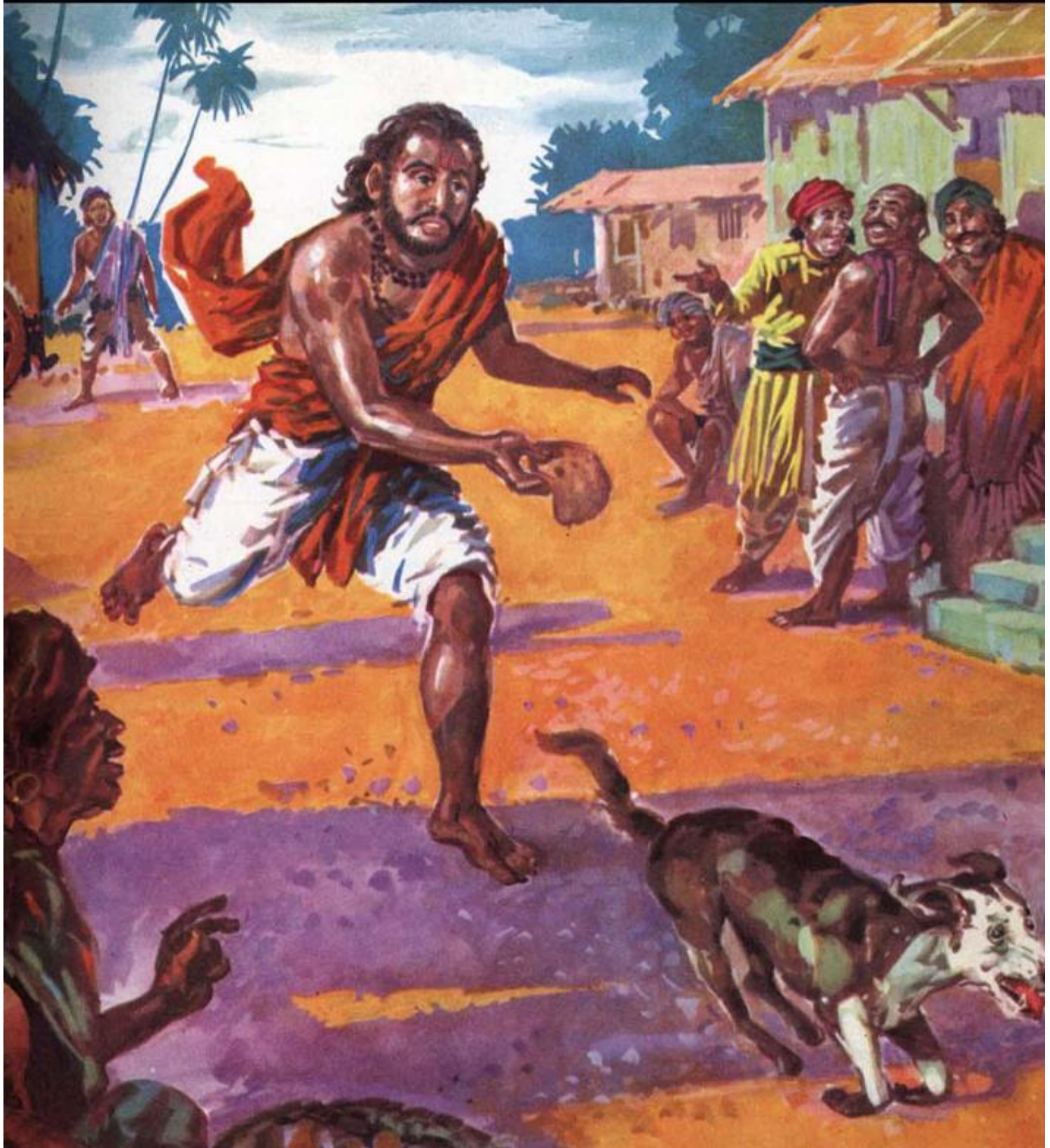
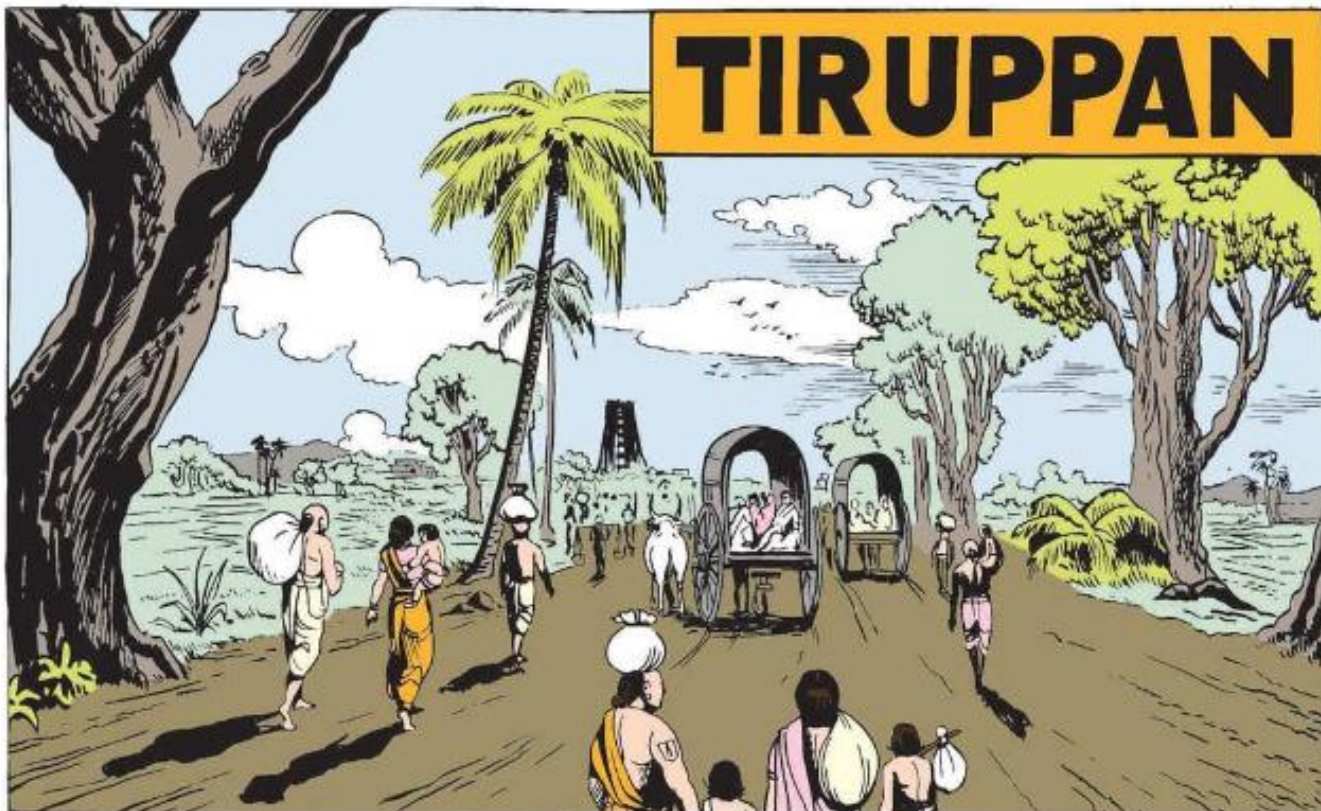




TIRUPPAN AND KANAKADASA

TWO TALES OF DEVOTION





TIRUPPAN

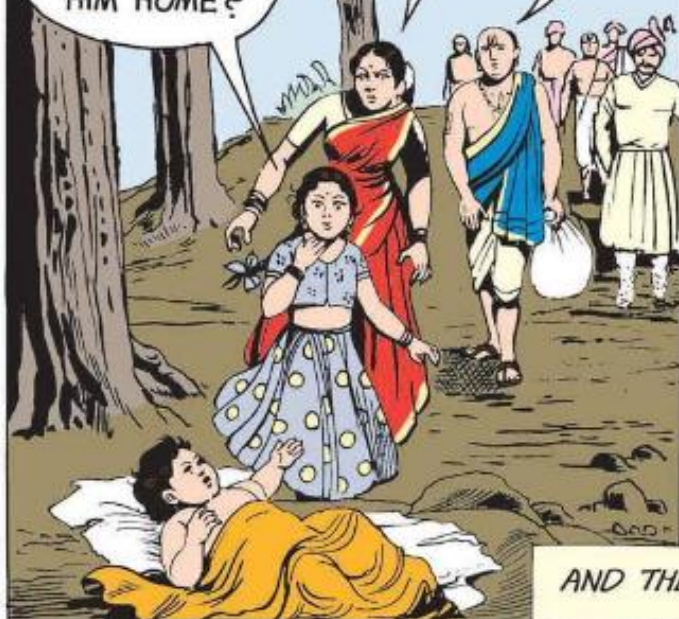
THE ROAD TO SRIRANGAM, THE HOLY CITY OF LORD RANGANATHA, WAS CROWDED WITH PILGRIMS WHO WERE ON THEIR WAY TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL HELD THERE EVERY YEAR.

A CHILD HAD BEEN ABANDONED BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND ITS PITEOUS CRIES MADE A FEW PILGRIMS PAUSE FOR A WHILE.

MOTHER, HE IS BEAUTIFUL! CAN WE TAKE HIM HOME?

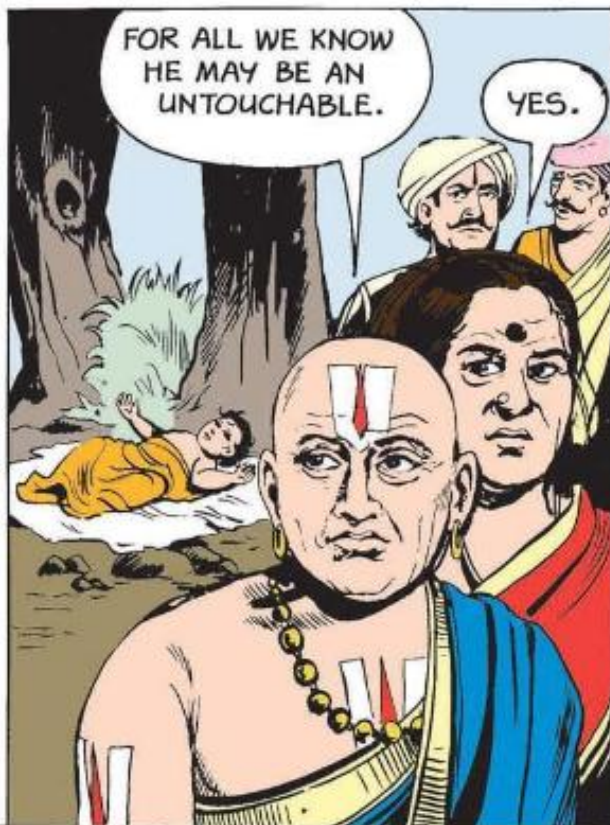
HUSH. DON'T GO NEAR HIM!

DON'T TOUCH HIM!



FOR ALL WE KNOW HE MAY BE AN UNTOUCHABLE.

YES.

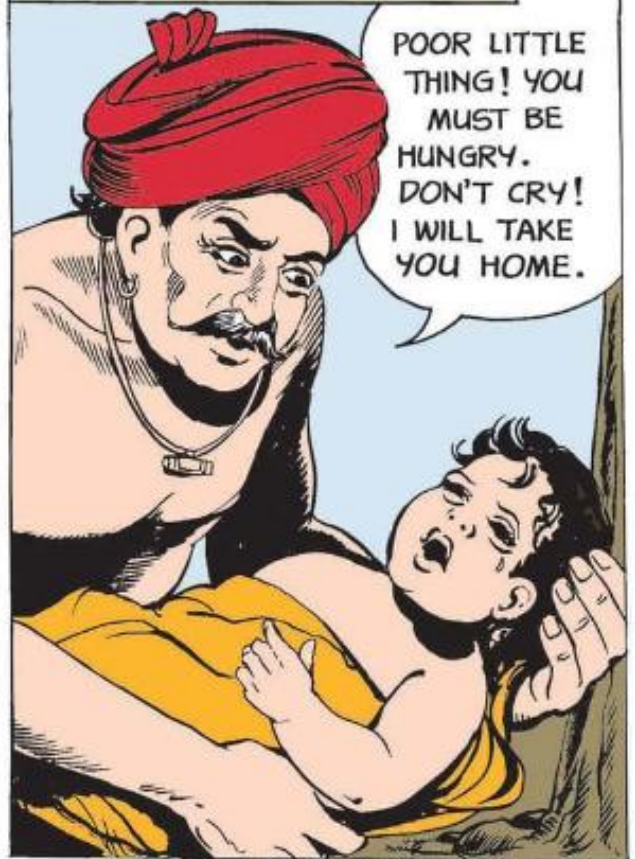


AND THEY WENT ON WITH THEIR JOURNEY.

AT LAST A SWEEPER CAME BY.



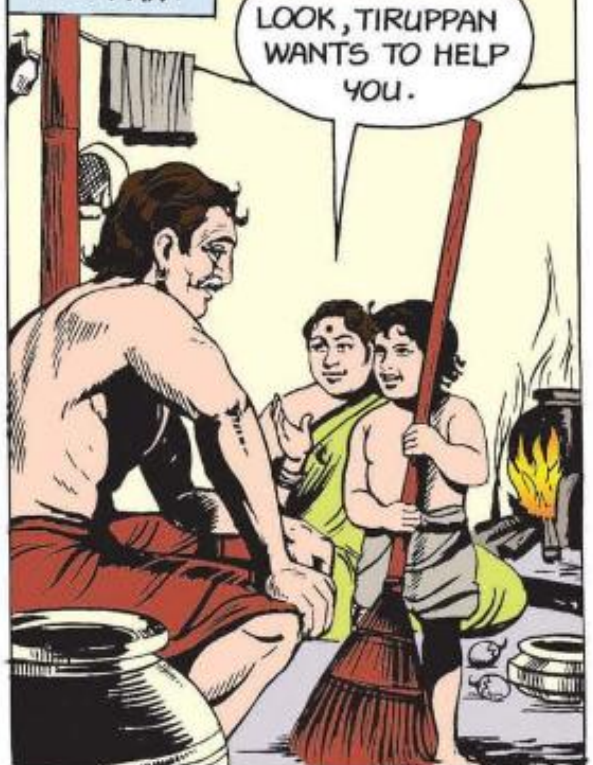
HE PICKED UP THE CHILD ...



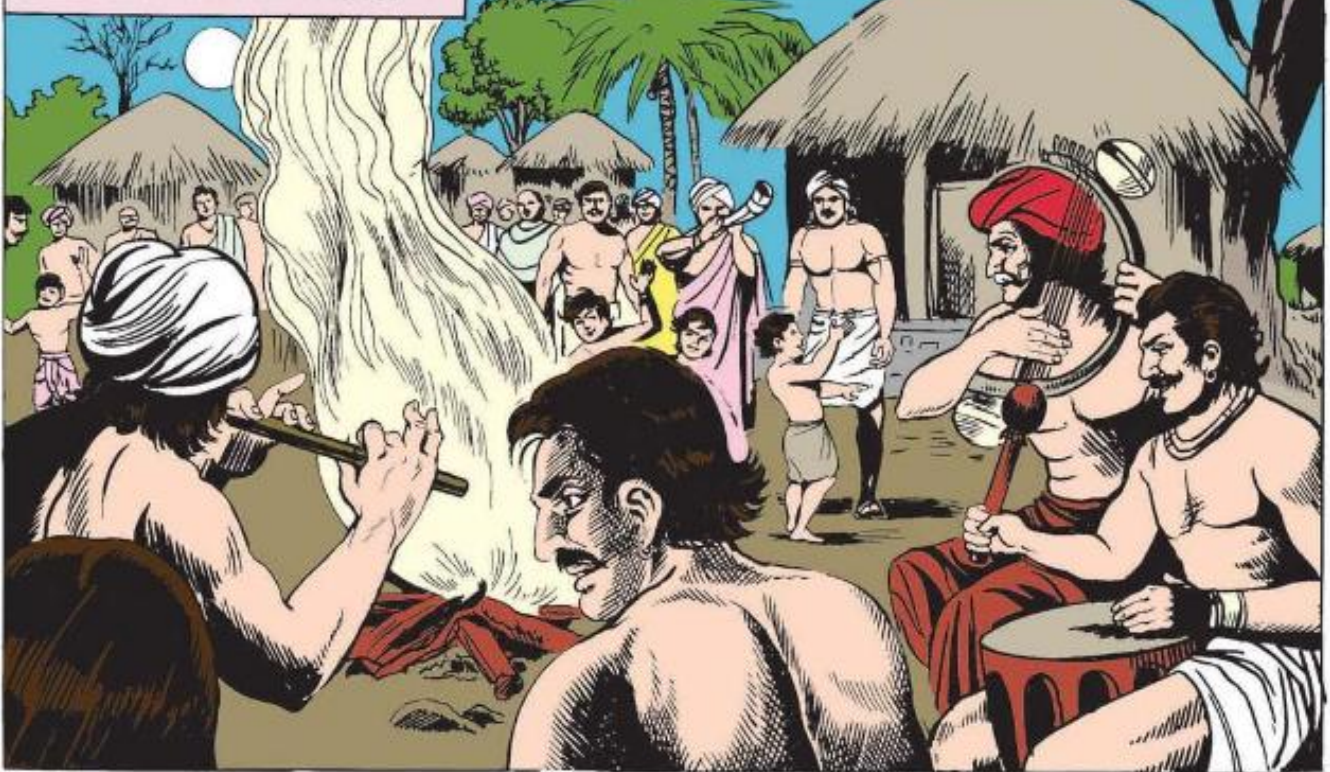
...AND TOOK IT TO HIS HOME ON THE OUT-SKIRTS OF THE CITY WHERE PEOPLE OF HIS COMMUNITY LIVED.



THE CHILD GREW UP UNDER THE LOVING CARE OF HIS FOSTER-PARENTS. THEY NAMED HIM TIRUPPAN.



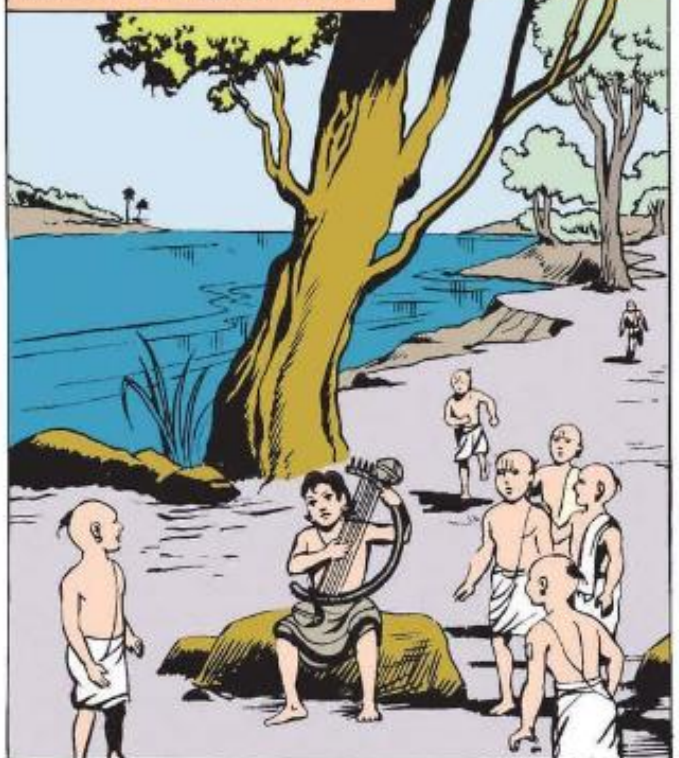
AFTER THE HARD DAY'S WORK, TIRUPPAN'S FATHER AND HIS RELATIVES USED TO GO HOME LATE IN THE EVENING. AFTER EATING A FRUGAL MEAL THEY WOULD ASSEMBLE TOGETHER AND SING SONGS, WHILE TIRUPPAN AND THE OTHER CHILDREN WOULD DANCE.



TIRUPPAN LEARNT TO PLAY ON THE YAL, WHICH IS A KIND OF STRINGED INSTRUMENT.

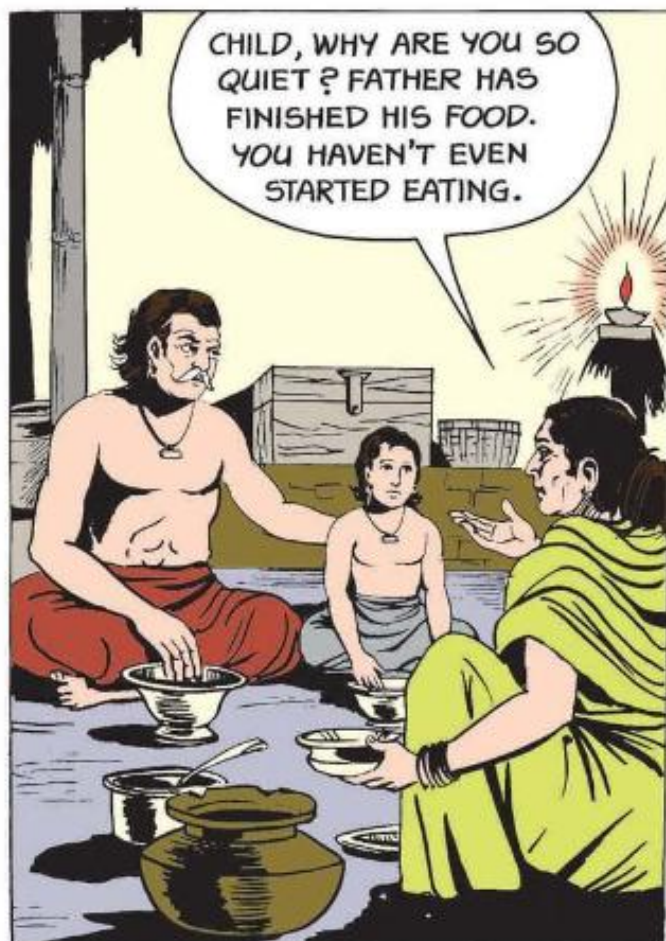
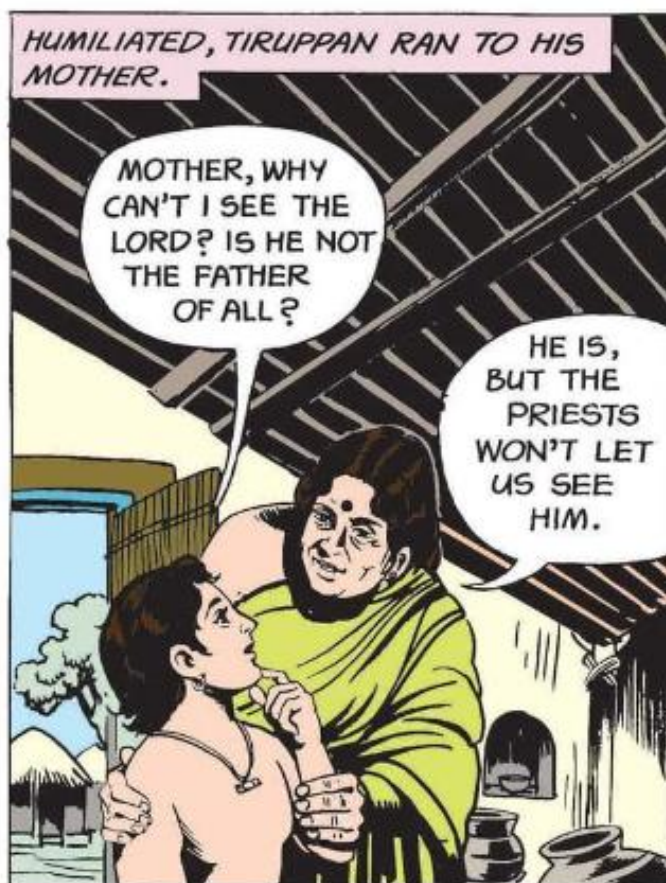


TIRUPPAN'S MUSIC WAS SO ENCHANTING THAT WHEN HE WENT OUT PLAYING ON THE YAL EVEN THE BRAHMAN BOYS WOULD FOLLOW HIM.

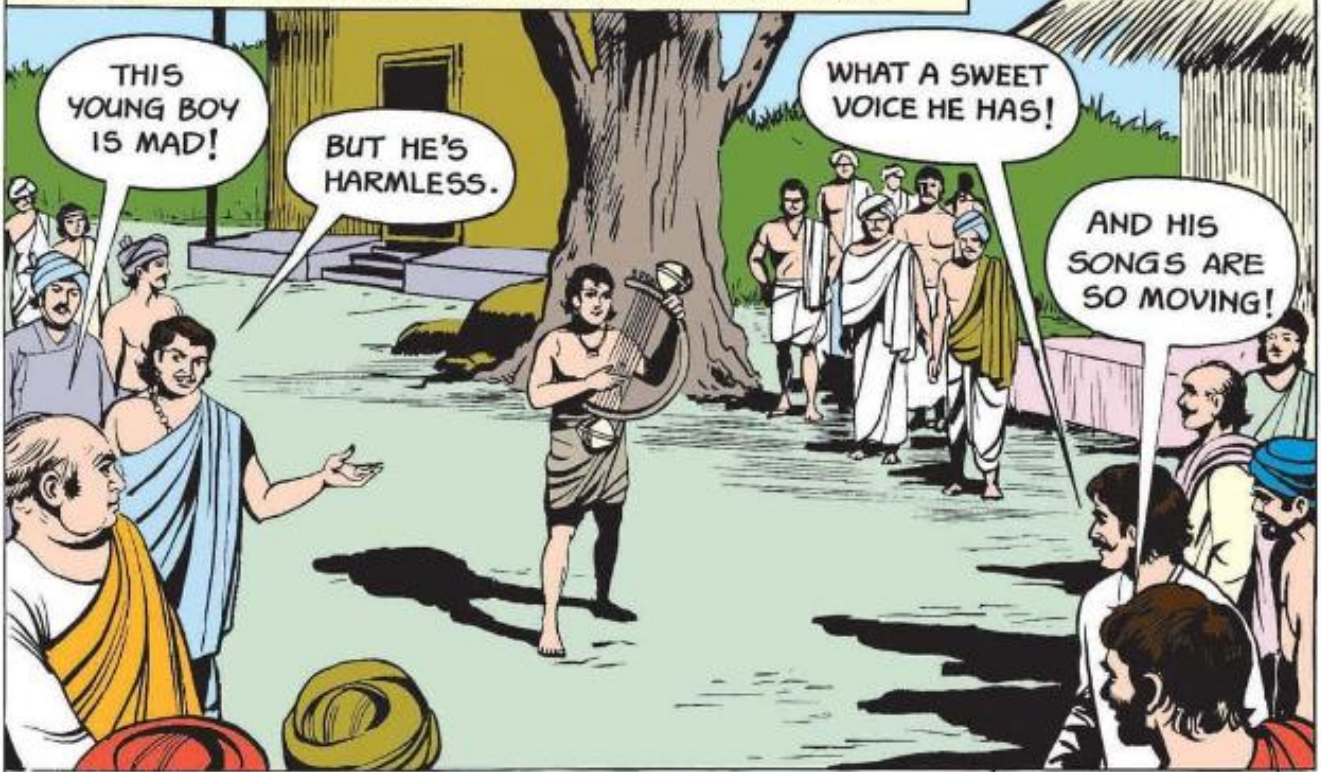


TIRUPPAN USED TO ACCOMPANY HIS FATHER WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO KEEP THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE TEMPLE CLEAN.

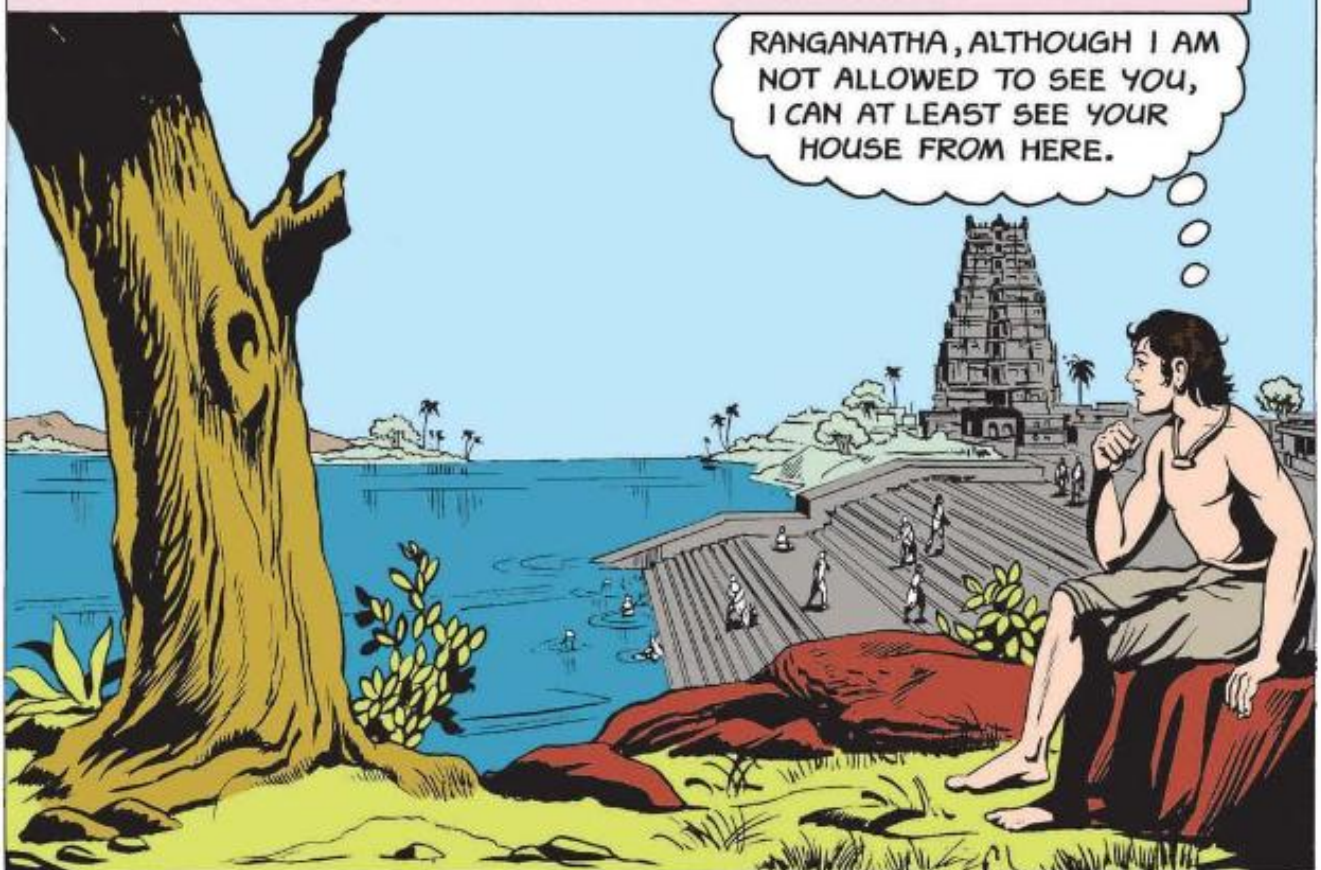




TIRUPPAN, SINGING WITH A YAL IN HAND AND SURROUNDED BY A CROWD, BECAME A COMMON SIGHT IN SRIRANGAM.

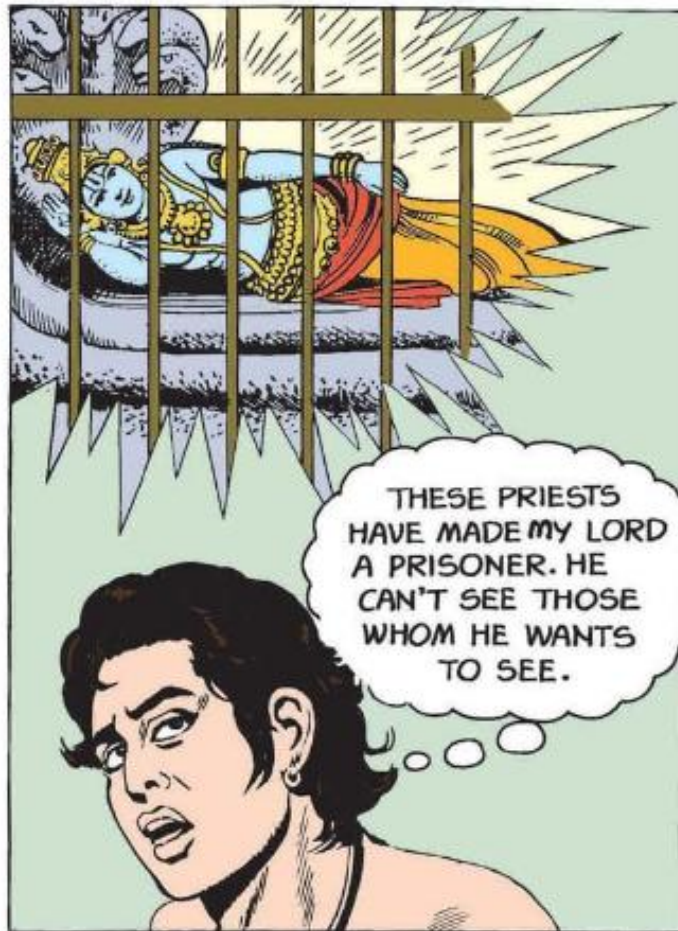


HIS FAVOURITE HAUNT WAS A CORNER ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER KAVERI FROM WHERE HE COULD CLEARLY SEE LORD RANGANATHA'S TEMPLE.



TIRUPPAN'S THOUGHTS WERE
CONSTANTLY FIXED ON THE LORD.

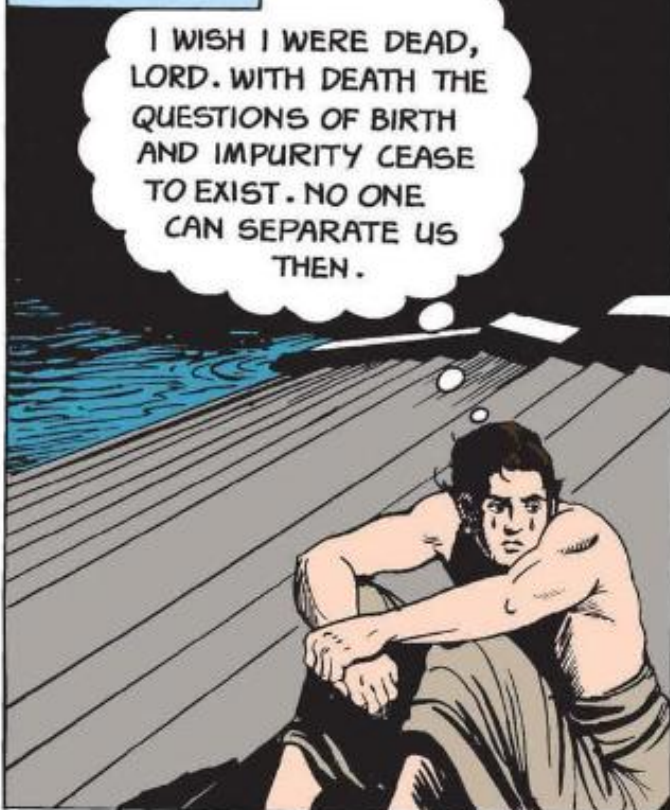
I WISH TO SEE LORD
RANGANATHA. PERHAPS
THE LORD HIMSELF IS
LONGING TO SEE ME.



THESE PRIESTS
HAVE MADE MY LORD
A PRISONER. HE
CAN'T SEE THOSE
WHOM HE WANTS
TO SEE.

ONE NIGHT TIRUPPAN BECAME
DESPERATE.

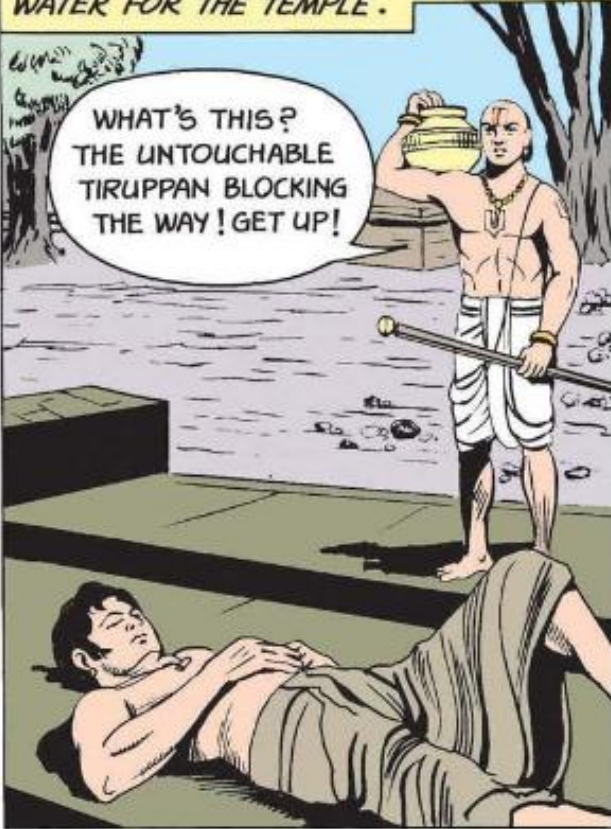
I WISH I WERE DEAD,
LORD. WITH DEATH THE
QUESTIONS OF BIRTH
AND IMPURITY CEASE
TO EXIST. NO ONE
CAN SEPARATE US
THEN.



GRADUALLY A BLISSFUL SLEEP
OVERCAME HIM.



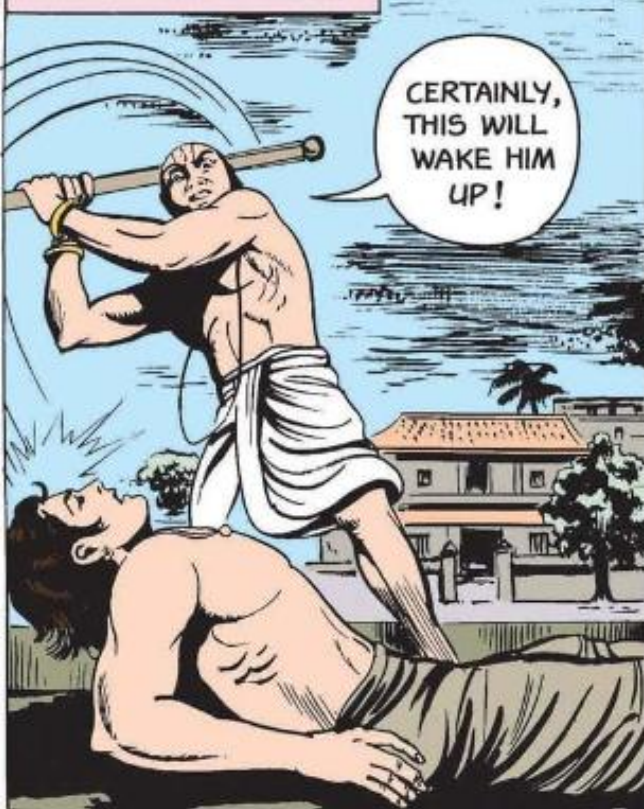
EARLY THE NEXT MORNING LOKASARANGA MUNI, A PRIEST, CAME THERE TO FETCH WATER FOR THE TEMPLE.



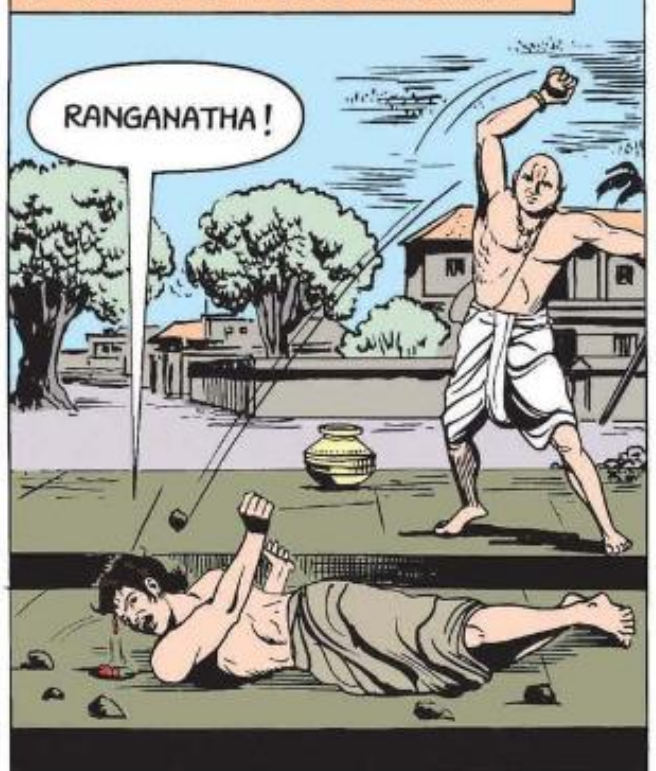
TIRUPPAN WAS FAST ASLEEP AND THE ANGRY WORDS OF THE PRIEST FAILED TO WAKE HIM.



THE PRIEST HIT TIRUPPAN ON THE HEAD WITH HIS STICK.



STILL SMOULDERING WITH ANGER. THE PRIEST SHOWED A VOLLEY OF STONES ON POOR TIRUPPAN.



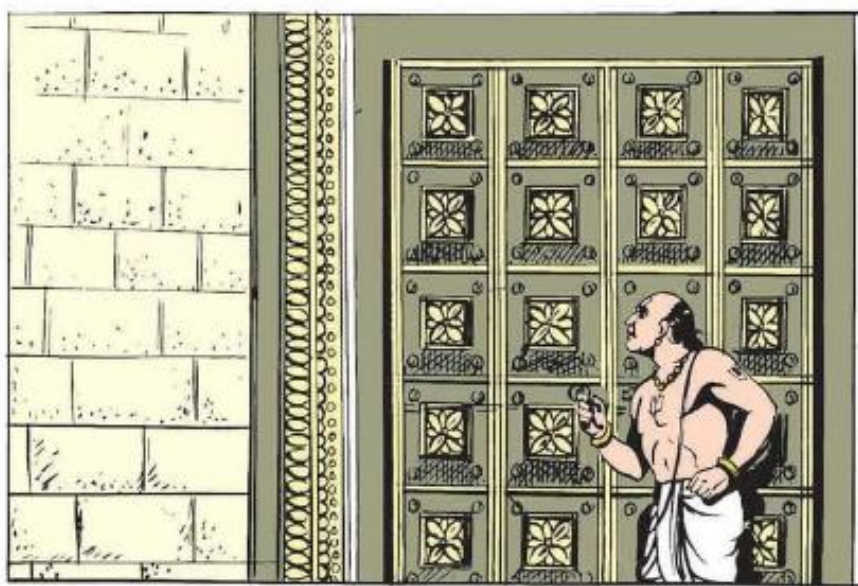
AT LAST THE PRIEST TURNED TO THE TASK FOR WHICH HE HAD COME.



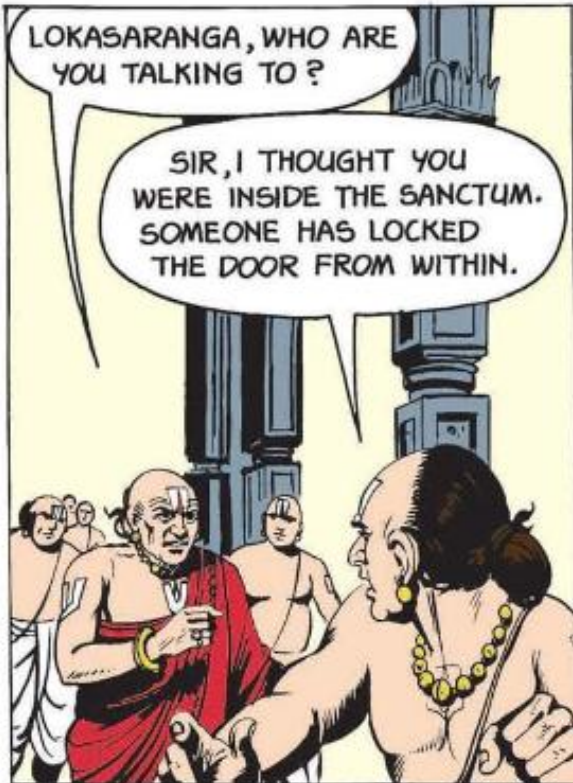
HAVING COLLECTED THE WATER THE PRIEST WALKED TOWARDS THE TEMPLE.



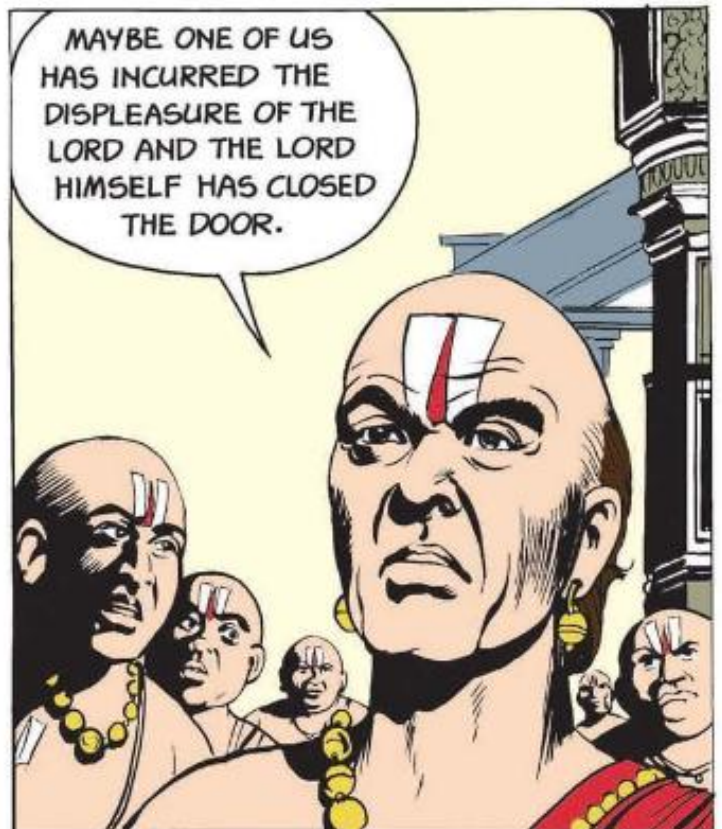
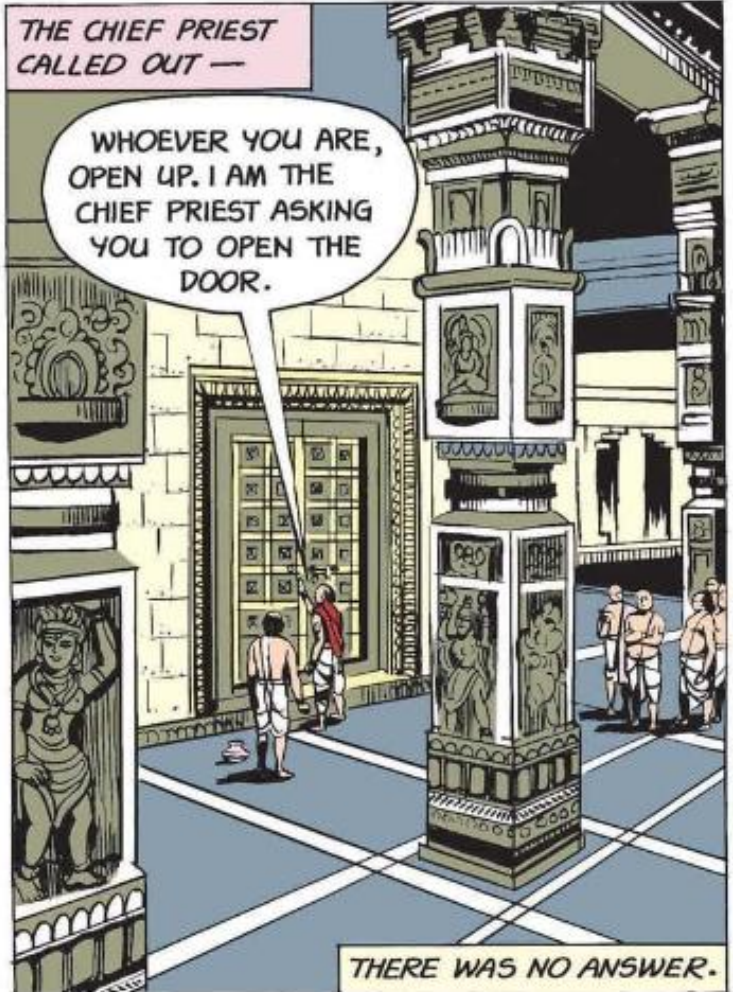
HE FOUND THE DOOR OF THE SANCTUM CLOSED.



OPEN UP, SIR. THIS IS LOKASARANGA. I HAVE BROUGHT WATER FOR THE PUJA.



ALL JOINED TOGETHER AND PUSHED THE DOOR IN AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE IT OPEN.



THE CHIEF PRIEST WAS RIGHT, FOR JUST THEN A VOICE WAS HEARD FROM INSIDE.

LOKASARANGA HAS HURT ME BY HURTING MY DEVOTEE, TIRUPPAN. UNLESS LOKASARANGA CARRIES TIRUPPAN ON HIS SHOULDERS AND GOES ROUND THE TEMPLE, THE DOOR WILL NOT OPEN.

WHAT A SINNER I AM! HURTING THE DEVOTEE OF THE LORD! PARDON ME, LORD.

COME ON, TIRUPPAN. I WILL CARRY YOU THERE ON MY SHOULDERS.

YOU, A PRIEST CARRYING ME, A SINNER? NO, YOU CAN'T DO THIS.

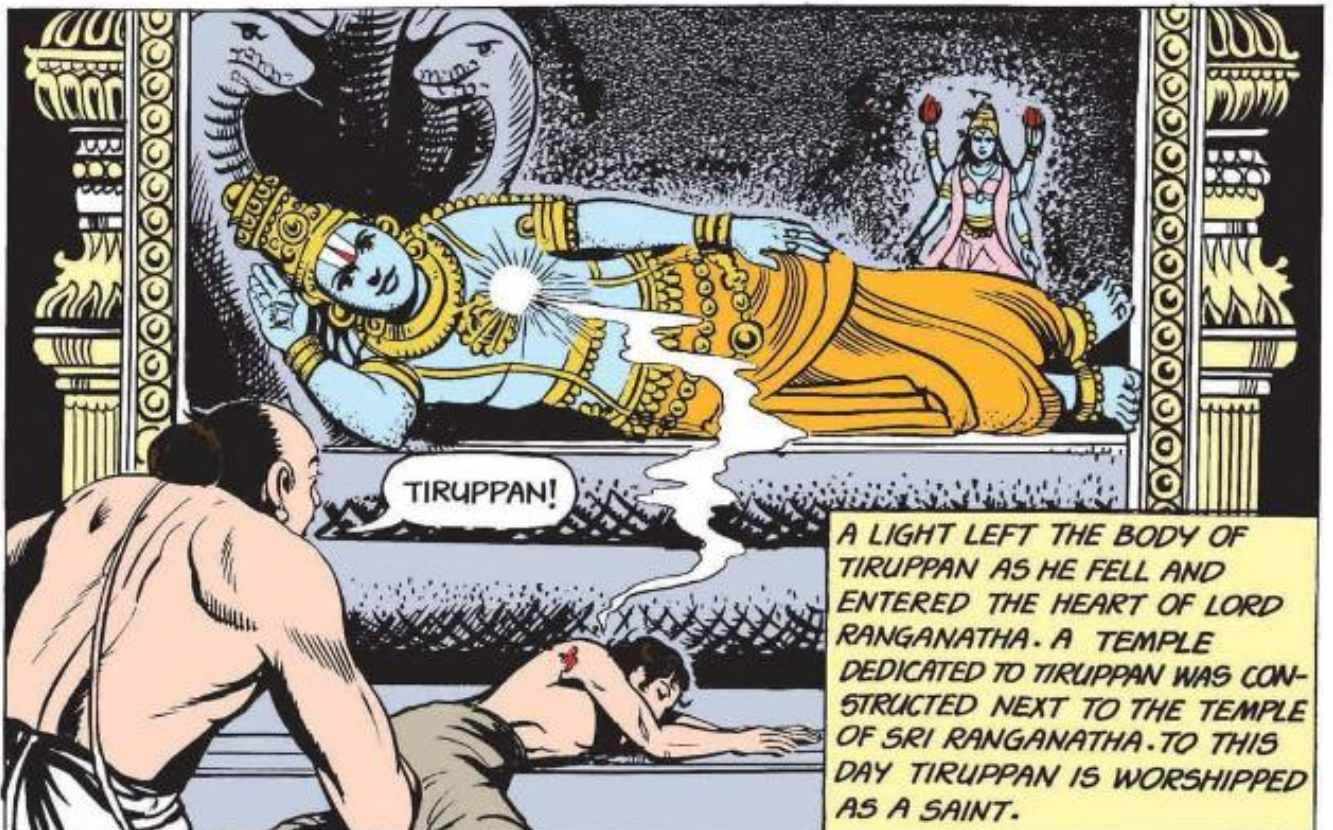
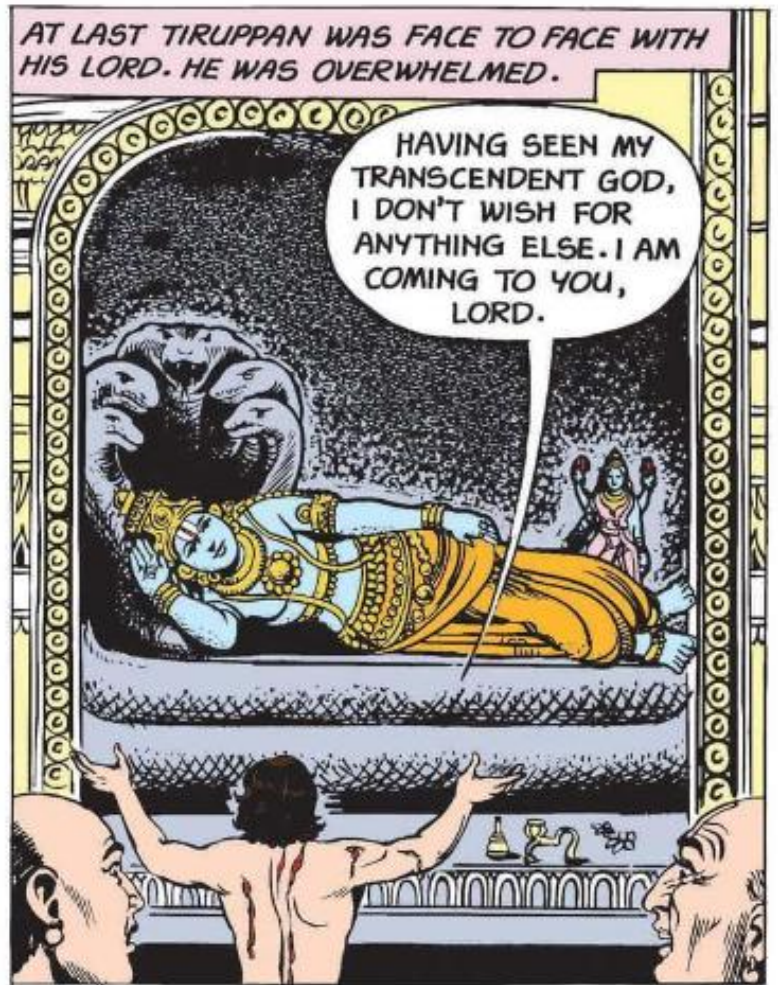
LOKASARANGA WENT TO TIRUPPAN—

TIRUPPAN, PLEASE PARDON ME. COME TO THE TEMPLE. LORD RANGANATHA IS CALLING YOU.

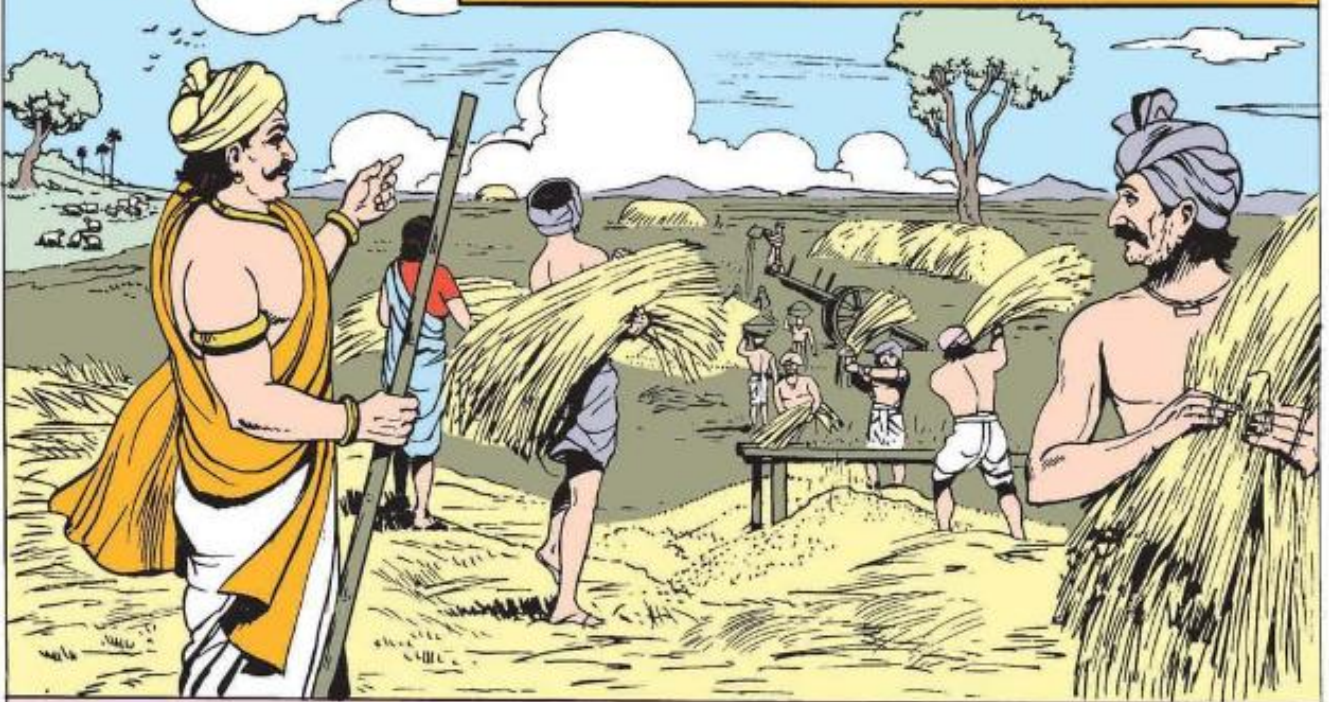
HAS MY LORD REALLY SENT FOR ME? I AM SO GLAD.

YOU CAN'T SAY 'NO' TO THE LORD. IT IS HIS WILL.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.



KANAKADASA



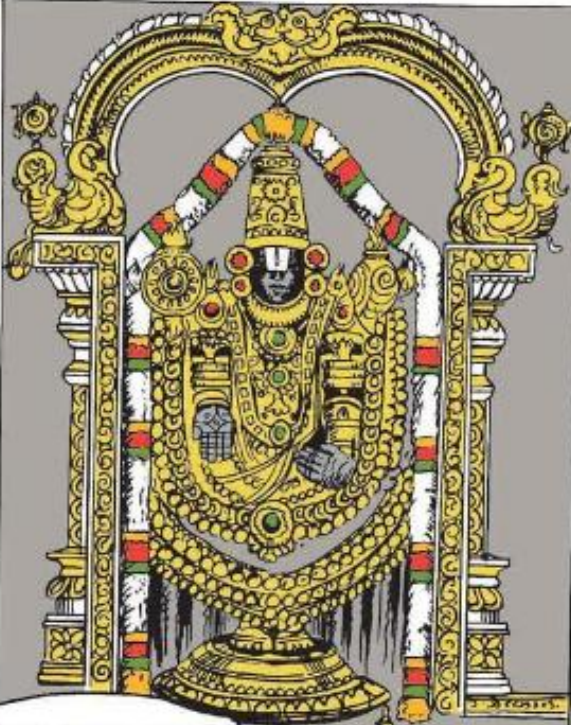
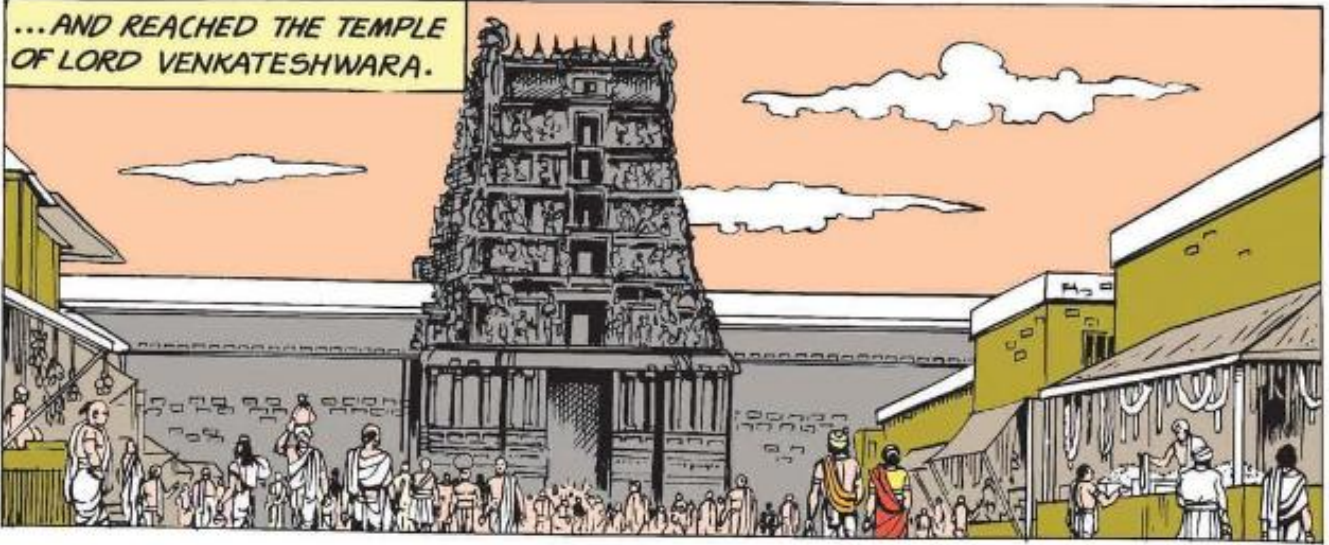
BIREGOWDA, A SHEPHERD, ROSE TO THE POSITION OF HEADMAN OF THE VILLAGE BADA NEAR DHARWAR * BY DINT OF HARD WORK.

ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, BACHAMMA, HE WENT ON A PILGRIMAGE TO TIRUPATI...



* IN KARNATAKA

...AND REACHED THE TEMPLE
OF LORD VENKATESHWARA.



LORD TIMMAPPA!*
BLESS ME WITH
A CHILD. I CRAVE
FOR NOTHING
ELSE.

IN DUE COURSE BACHAMMA
GAVE BIRTH TO A BOY.

SUCH A LOVELY
CHILD! WHAT WILL
YOU NAME HIM?

HE WAS BORN BY
THE GRACE OF LORD
TIMMAPPA. WE WILL
CALL HIM TIMMA.



* ANOTHER NAME FOR LORD VENKATESHWARA

LITTLE TIMMA WAS HELPFUL TO HIS FATHER. HE USED TO WATER THE SEEDLINGS.

WITHOUT WATER THESE SEEDLINGS CAN'T SURVIVE, CAN THEY, FATHER?

YOU ARE RIGHT, TIMMA, THEY CAN'T.



THEN THEY LIVE BECAUSE OF US, FATHER.

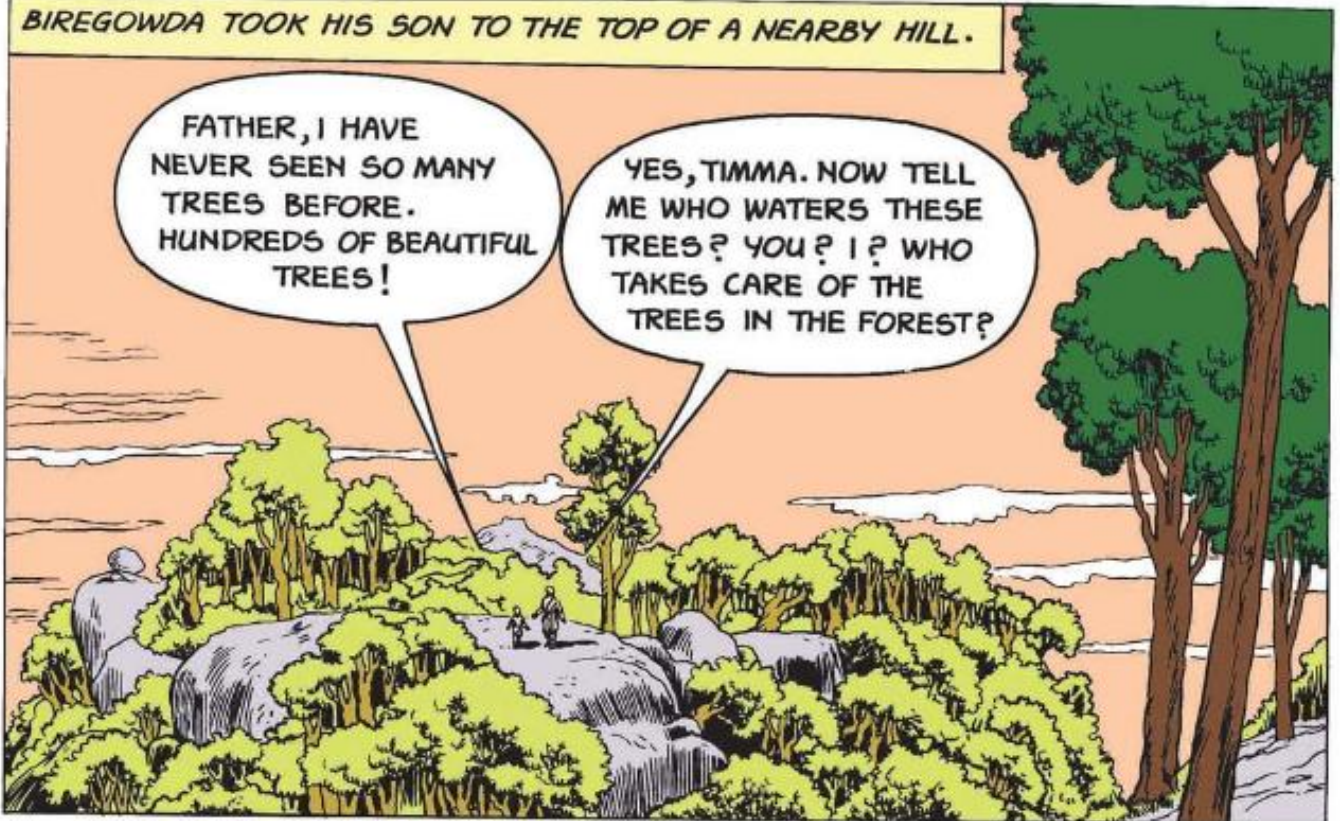
THERE YOU ARE WRONG, SON. I WILL TELL YOU WHY.



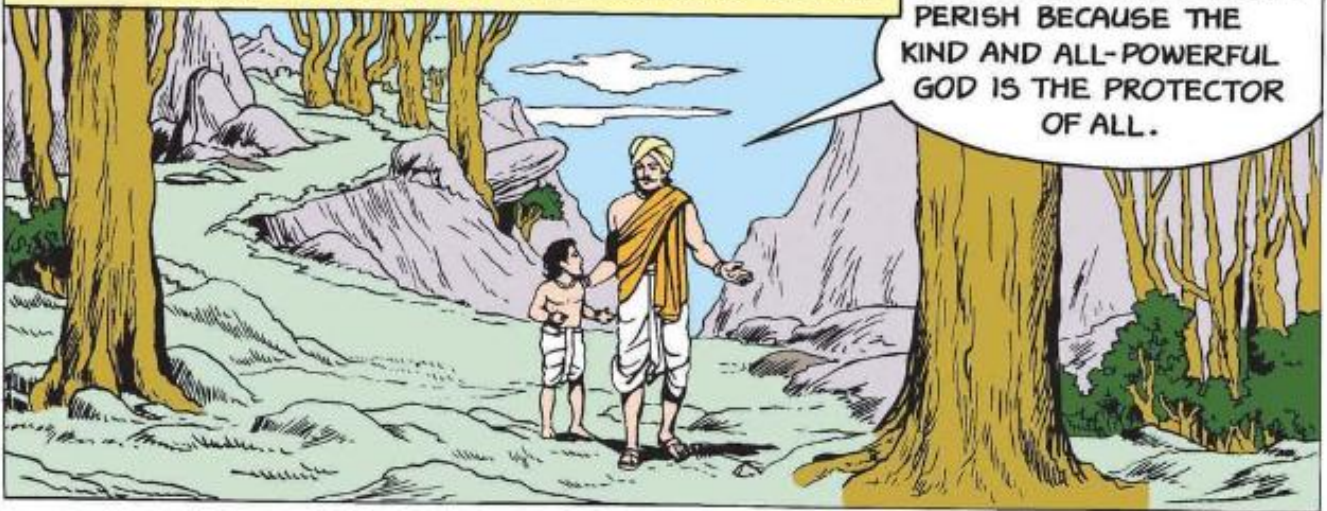
BIREGOWDA TOOK HIS SON TO THE TOP OF A NEARBY HILL.

FATHER, I HAVE NEVER SEEN SO MANY TREES BEFORE. HUNDREDS OF BEAUTIFUL TREES!

YES, TIMMA. NOW TELL ME WHO WATERS THESE TREES? YOU? I? WHO TAKES CARE OF THE TREES IN THE FOREST?

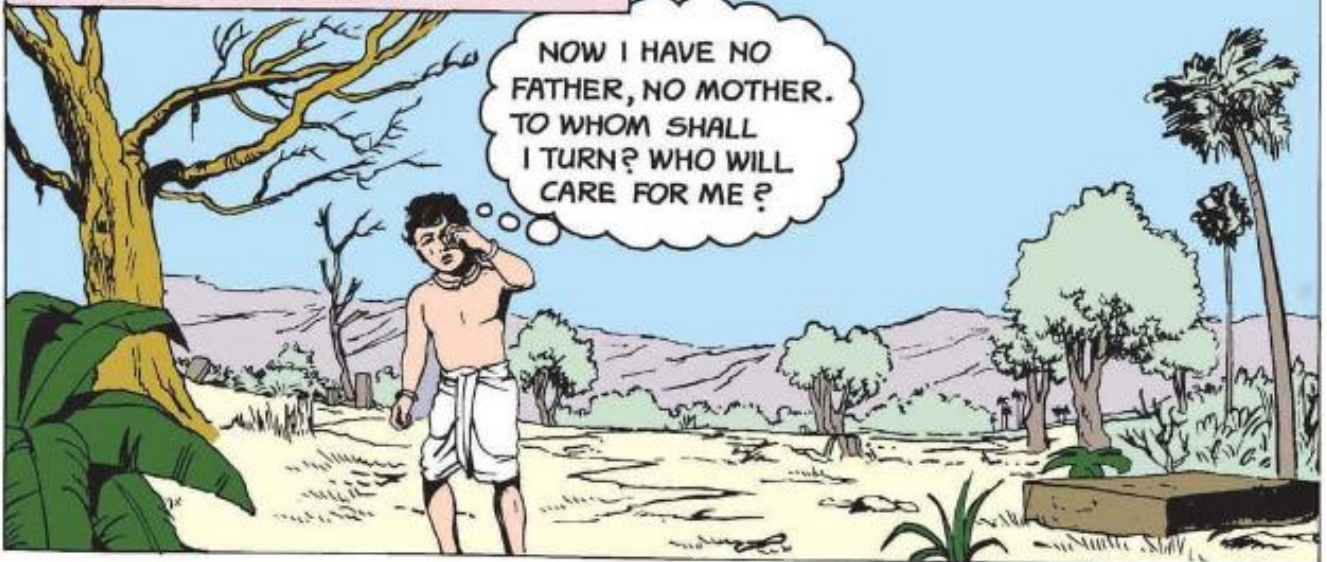


TIMMA'S FATHER DROVE HOME THE PROFOUND TRUTH.



YET THESE TREES WON'T PERISH BECAUSE THE KIND AND ALL-POWERFUL GOD IS THE PROTECTOR OF ALL.

LATER, BOTH HIS PARENTS DIED.



NOW I HAVE NO FATHER, NO MOTHER. TO WHOM SHALL I TURN? WHO WILL CARE FOR ME?

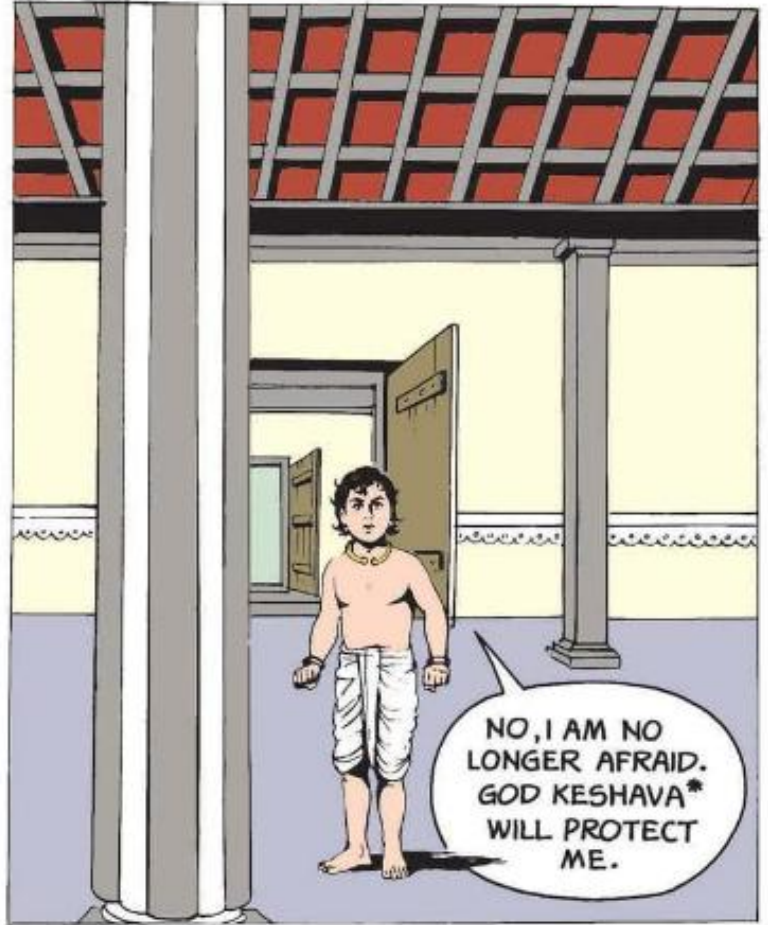
AS TIMMA WALKED INTO THE BIG AND EMPTY HOUSE —



NO ONE AT HOME! I CAN'T LIVE ALONE. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME? I AM SO AFRAID

THEN THE WORDS OF HIS FATHER
CAME BACK TO HIM IN A RUSH.

WHO WATERS THESE TREES?
YOU? I? WHO TAKES CARE OF
THE TREES IN THE FORESTS?
YET THESE TREES WON'T PERISH
BECAUSE THE KIND AND
ALL-POWERFUL GOD IS THE
PROTECTOR
OF ALL.

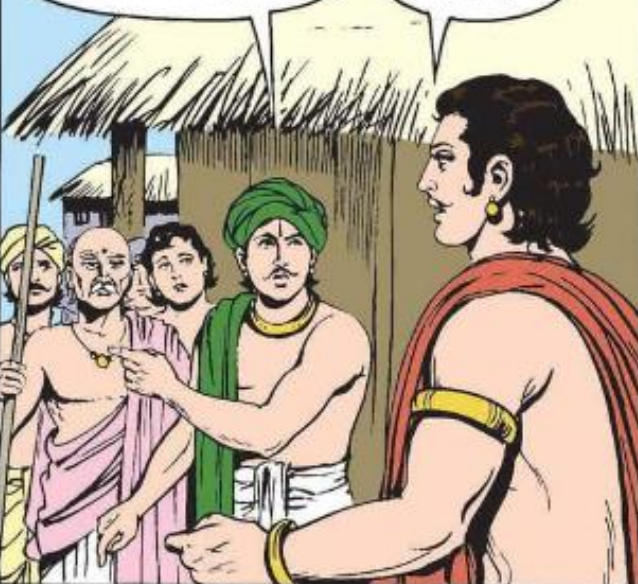


NO, I AM NO
LONGER AFRAID.
GOD KESHAVA*
WILL PROTECT
ME.

AS HE GREW UP, TIMMA EXHIBITED QUALITIES
OF LEADERSHIP INHERITED FROM HIS
FATHER. AND AN IMPLICIT FAITH IN
GOD HELPED HIM TO GROW UP
FEARLESS. ONE DAY —

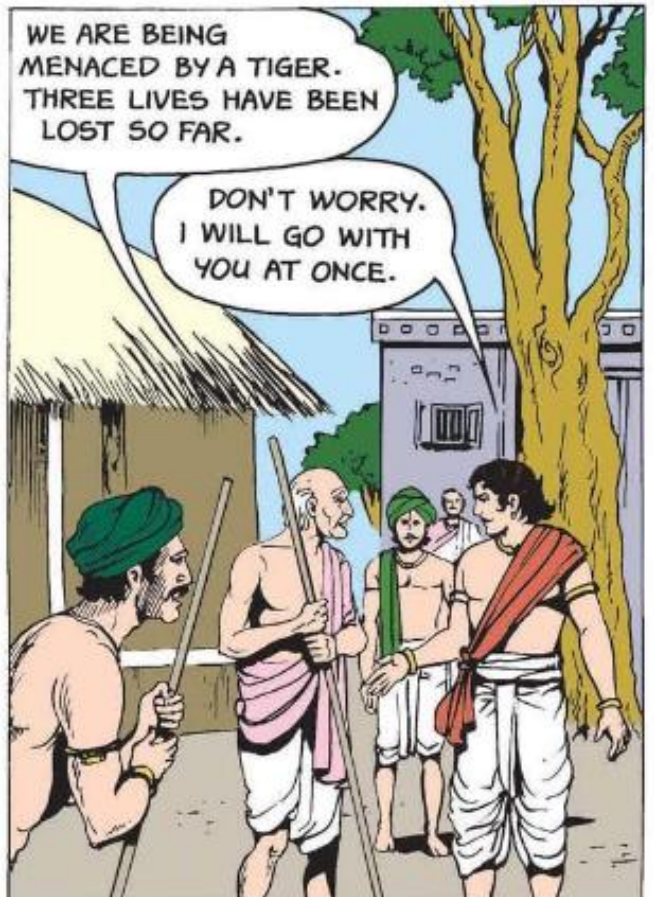
TIMMA, THESE PEOPLE
ARE FROM THE
NEXT VILLAGE.

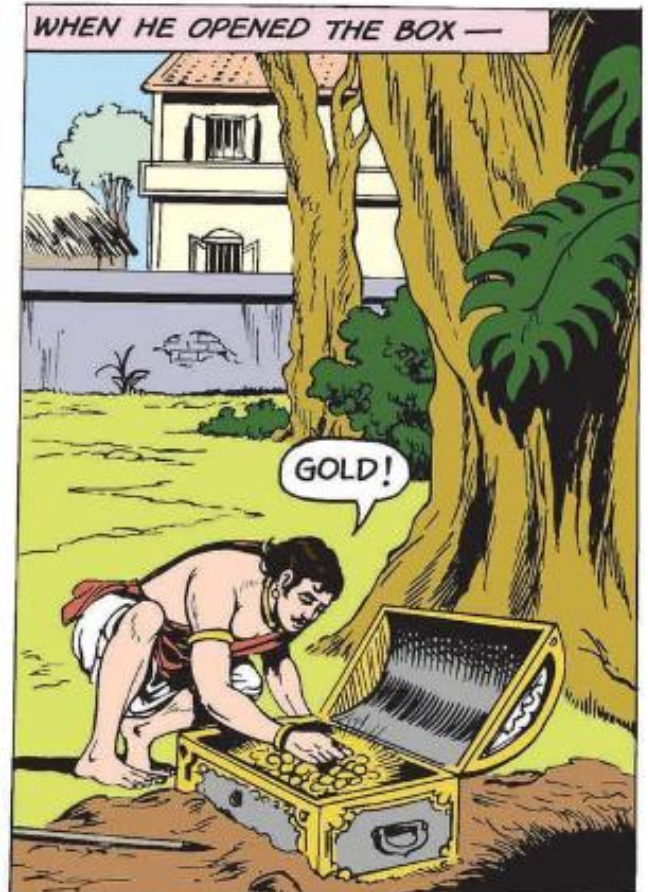
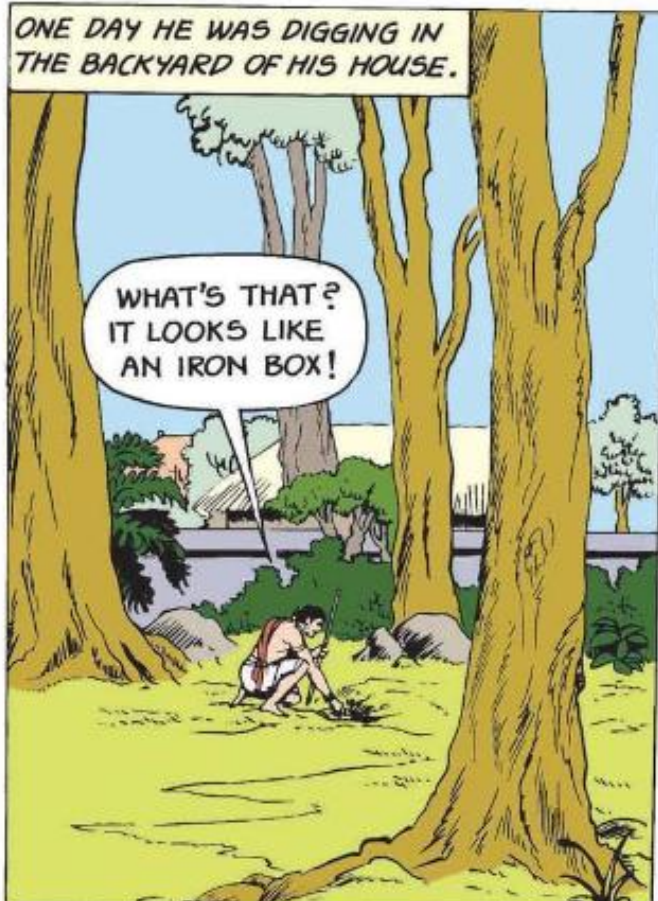
WHAT CAN
I DO FOR
YOU?

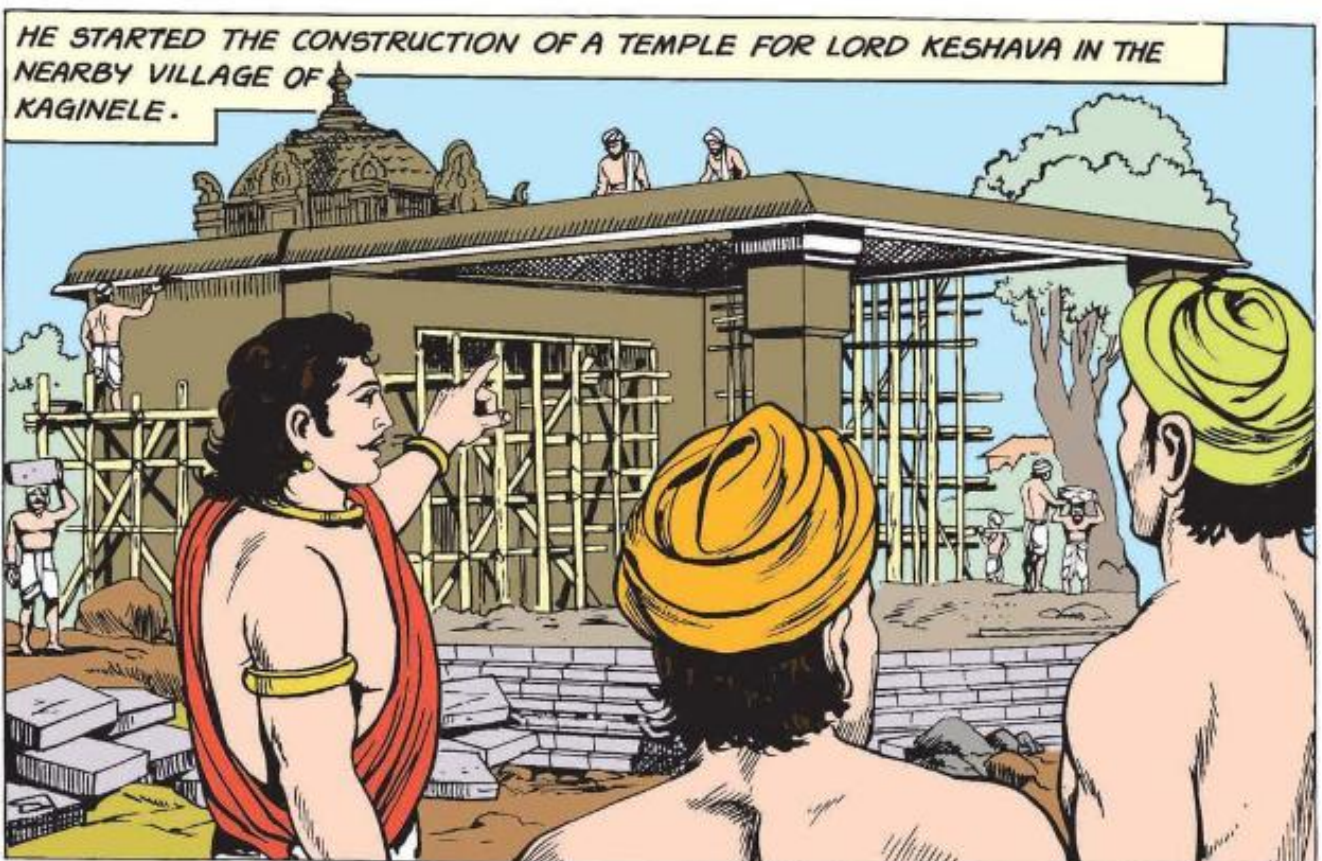
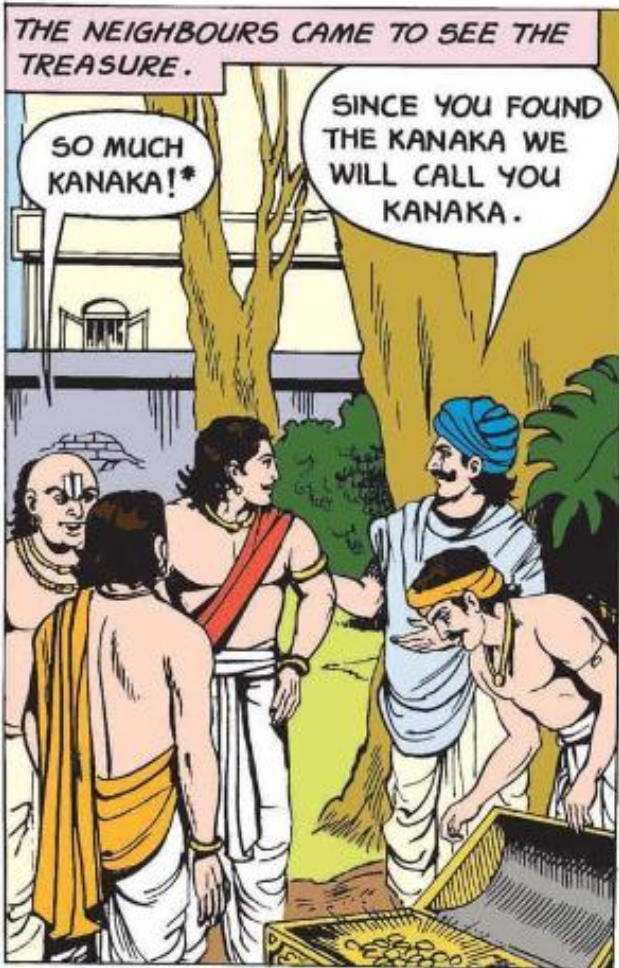


WE ARE BEING
MENACED BY A TIGER.
THREE LIVES HAVE BEEN
LOST SO FAR.

DON'T WORRY.
I WILL GO WITH
YOU AT ONCE.



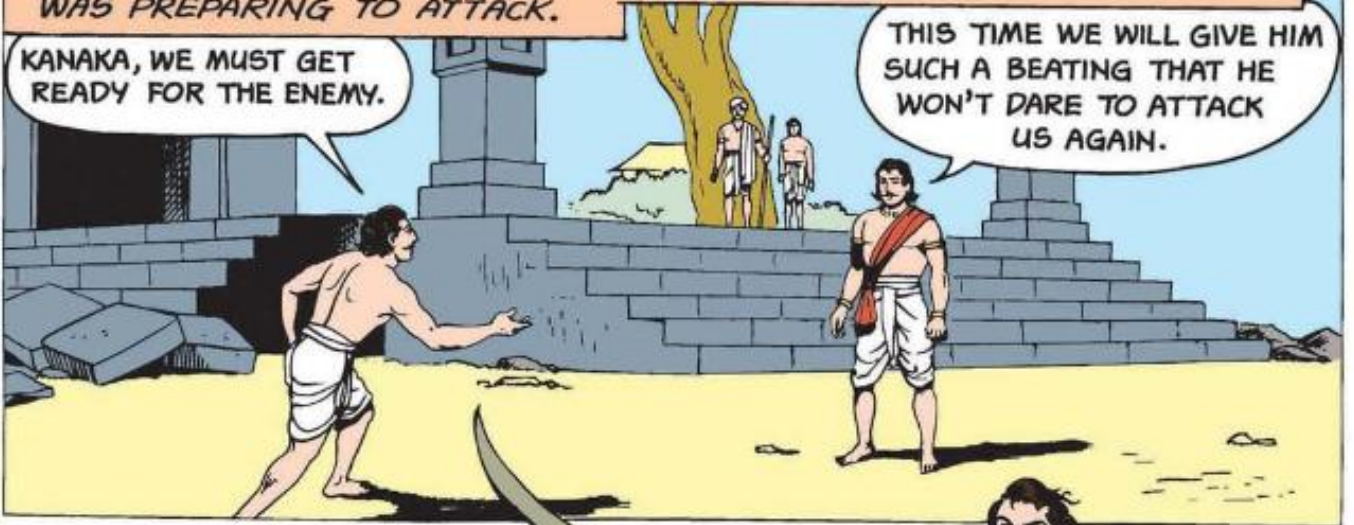




HARDLY HAD THE TEMPLE BEEN COMPLETED WHEN HE WAS CALLED UPON TO TAKE PART IN A BATTLE. THE HEADMAN OF A VILLAGE NEAR BY WAS PREPARING TO ATTACK.

KANAKA, WE MUST GET READY FOR THE ENEMY.

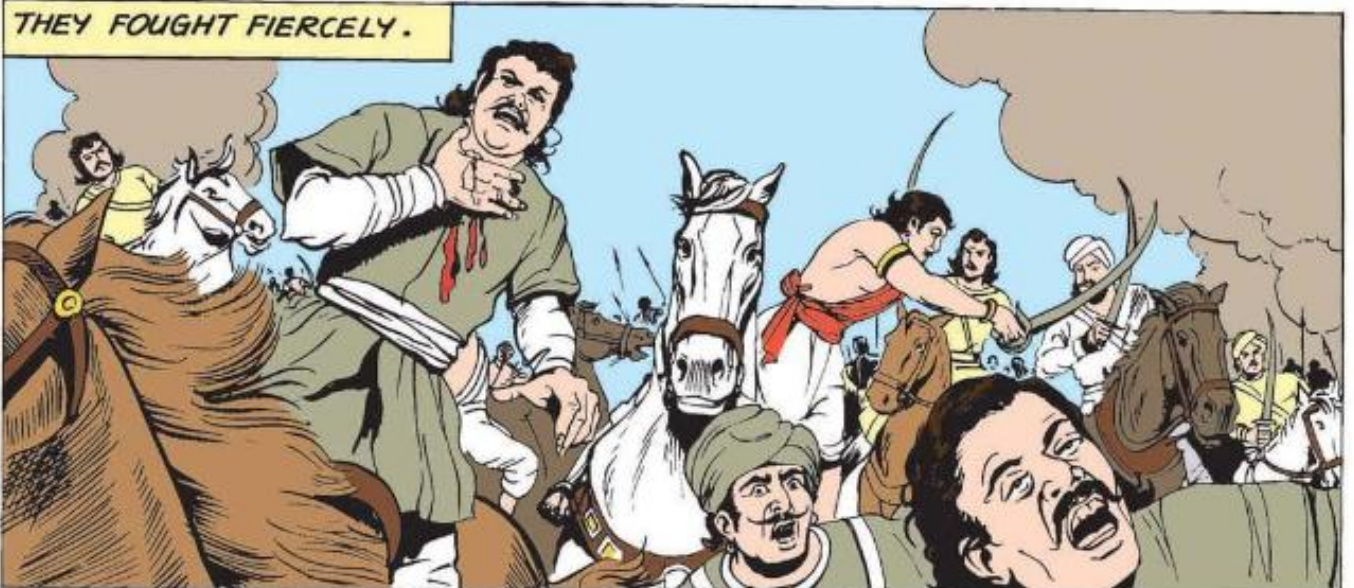
THIS TIME WE WILL GIVE HIM SUCH A BEATING THAT HE WON'T DARE TO ATTACK US AGAIN.



LED BY KANAKA, THE YOUNG MEN OF THE VILLAGE WENT TO BATTLE WITH THE INVADER.



THEY FOUGHT FIERCELY.



BUT TOWARDS THE END OF THE BATTLE —

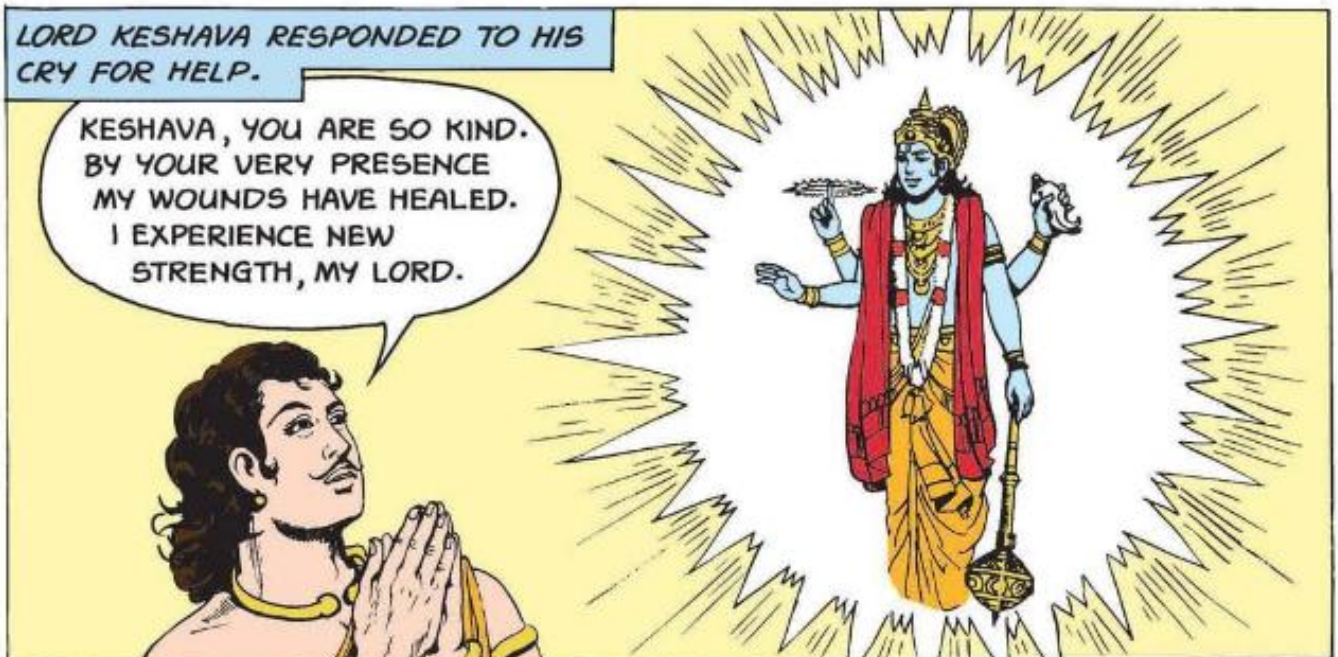


BY DUSK THE BATTLEFIELD WAS DESERTED EXCEPT FOR THE DEAD AND THE WOUNDED.



LORD KESHAVA RESPONDED TO HIS CRY FOR HELP.

KESHAVA, YOU ARE SO KIND.
BY YOUR VERY PRESENCE
MY WOUNDS HAVE HEALED.
I EXPERIENCE NEW
STRENGTH, MY LORD.



KANAKA THEN MADE A DECISION THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF HIS LIFE.

GOD BROUGHT ME BACK TO LIFE. HEREAFTER I WILL DEVOTE MY LIFE TO HIS SERVICE.



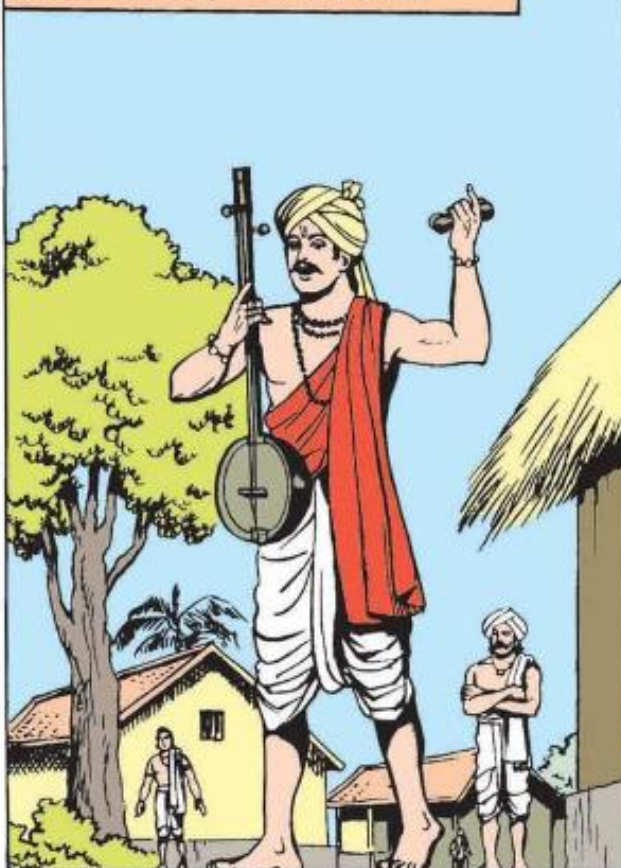
HE APPROACHED SAINT TATACHARYA.

SIR, I WISH TO DEDICATE MY LIFE TO GOD. PLEASE GUIDE ME.

BECOME A DASA,* O KANAKA. GOD WILL BE PLEASED.

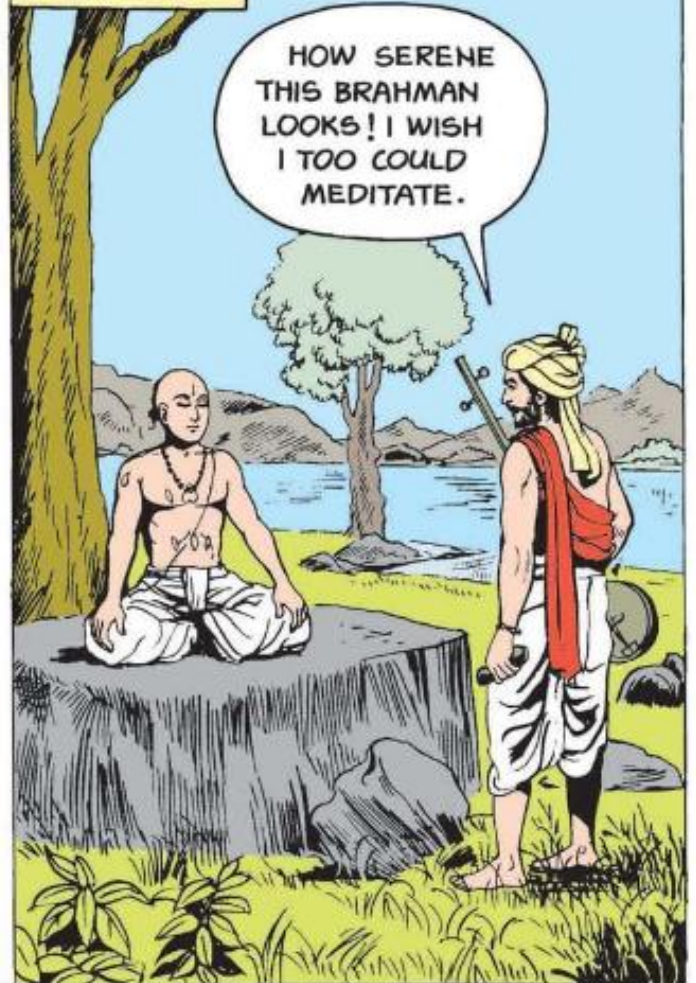


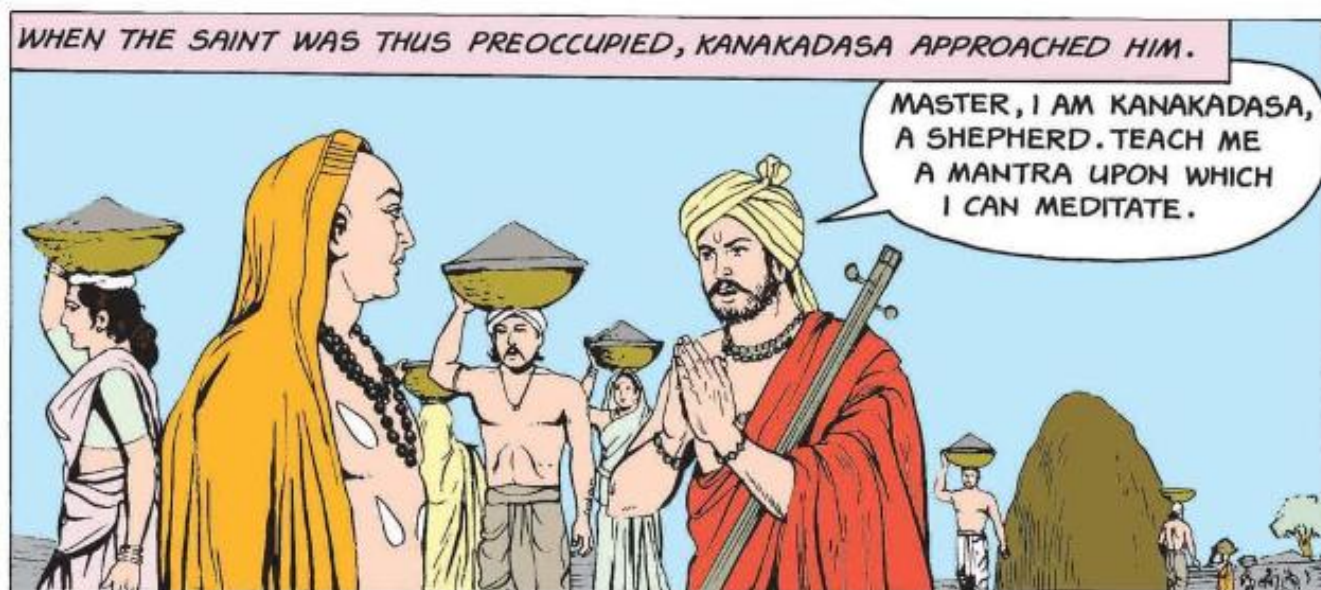
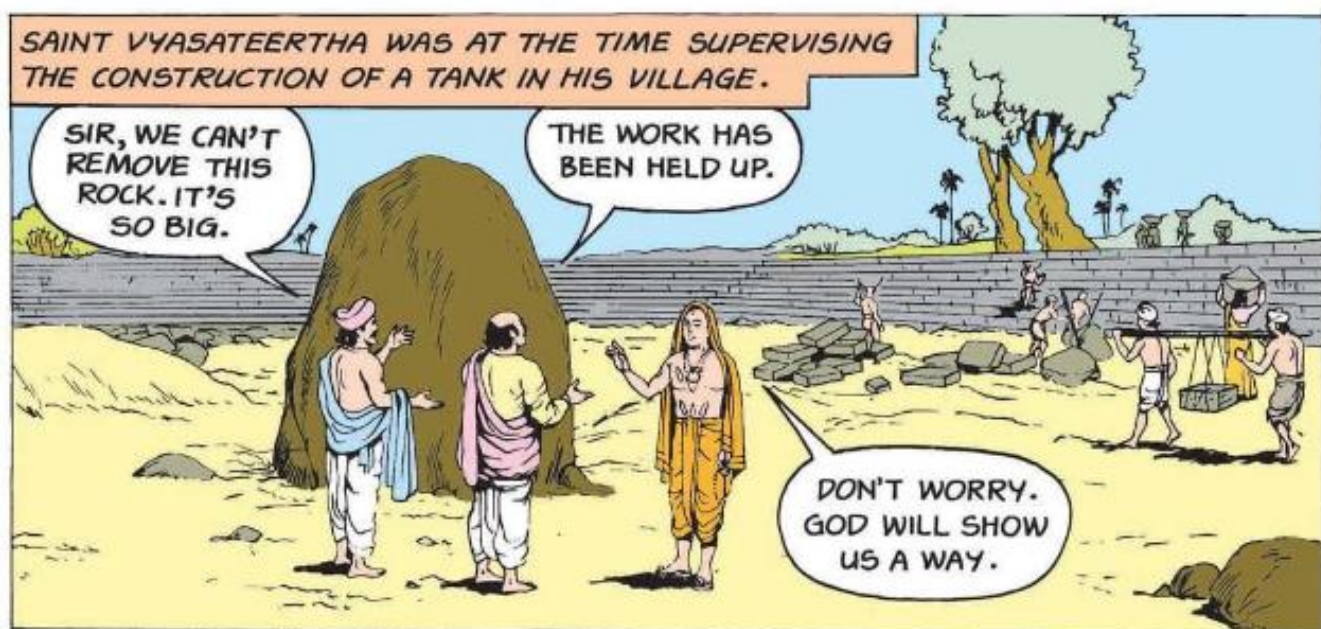
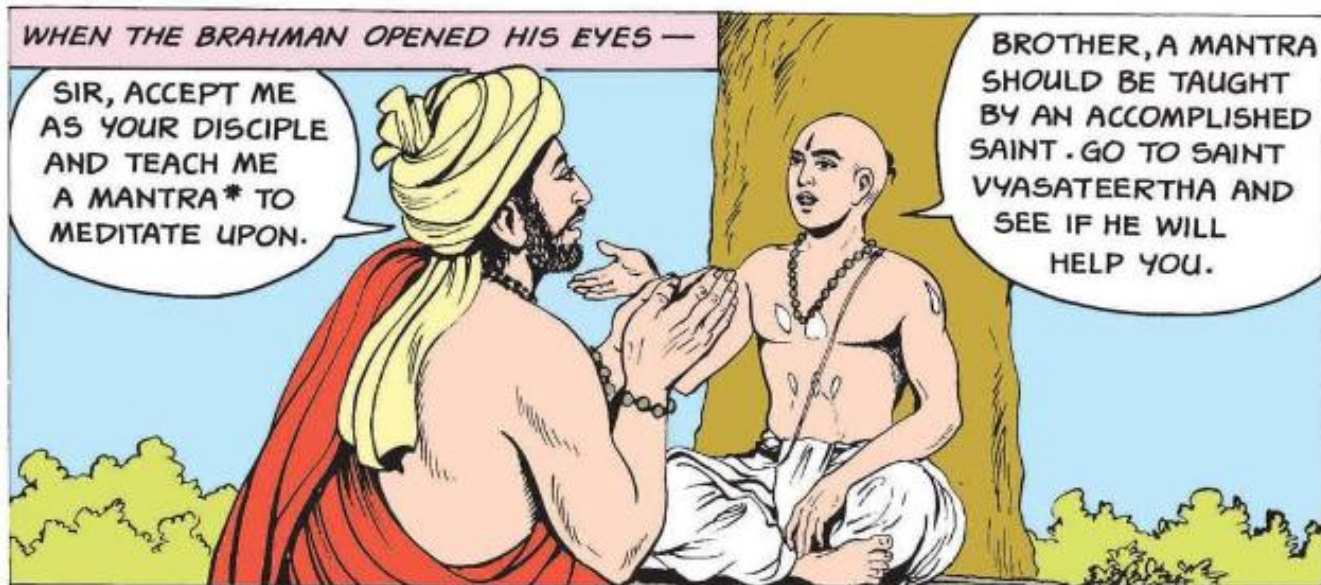
KANAKADASA, AS HE WAS NOW CALLED, WENT FROM ONE VILLAGE TO ANOTHER SINGING THE PRAISES OF THE LORD.



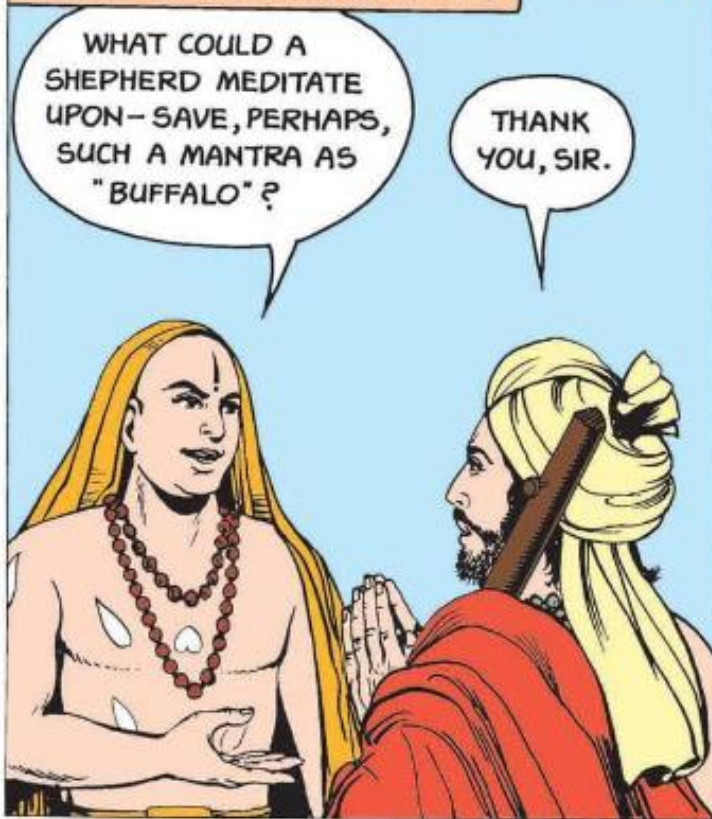
ONE DAY —

HOW SERENE THIS BRAHMAN LOOKS! I WISH I TOO COULD MEDITATE.





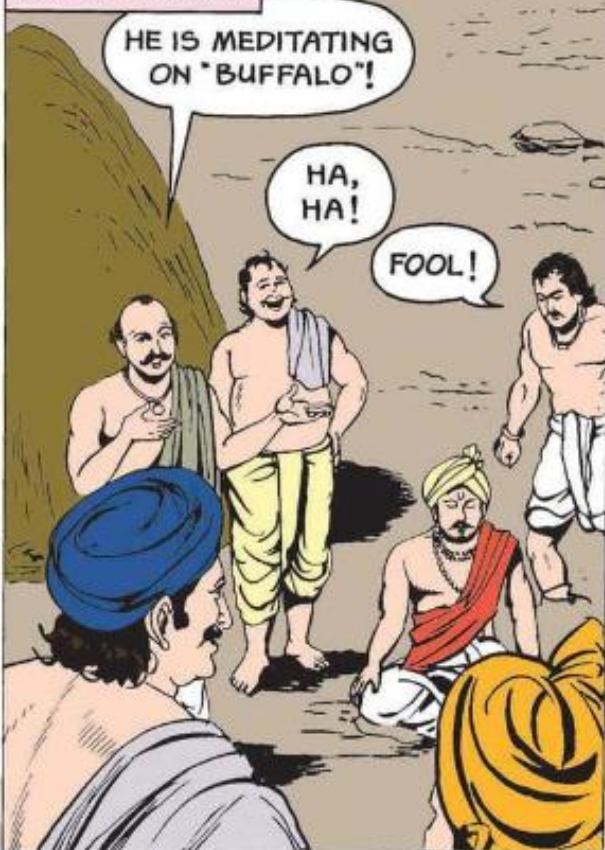
ON HEARING KANAKADASA'S PLEA, SAINT VYASATEERTHA WAS AMUSED.



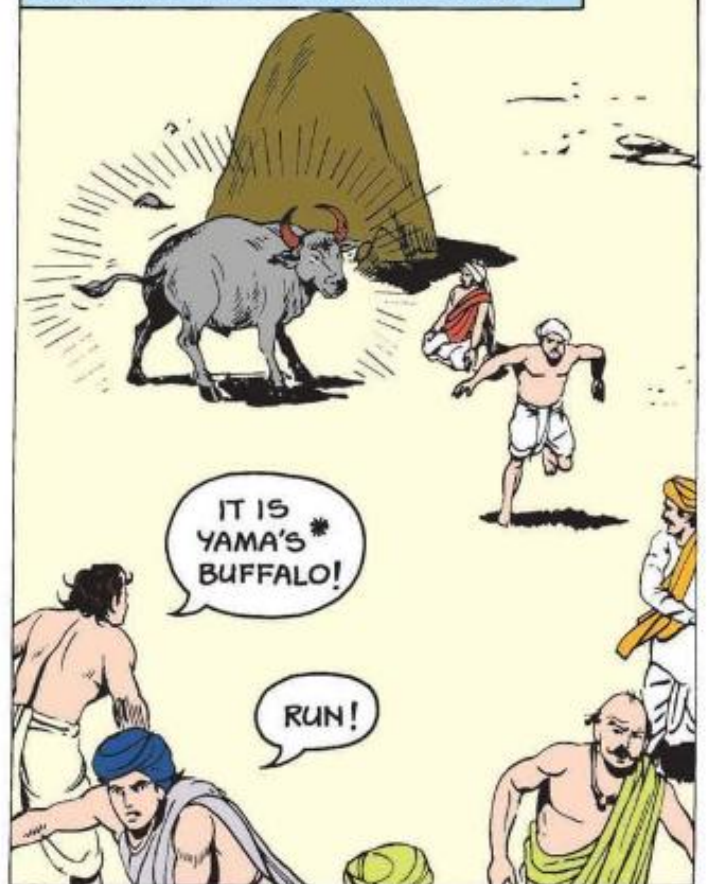
SITTING BESIDE THE ROCK, KANAKADASA BEGAN TO MEDITATE.

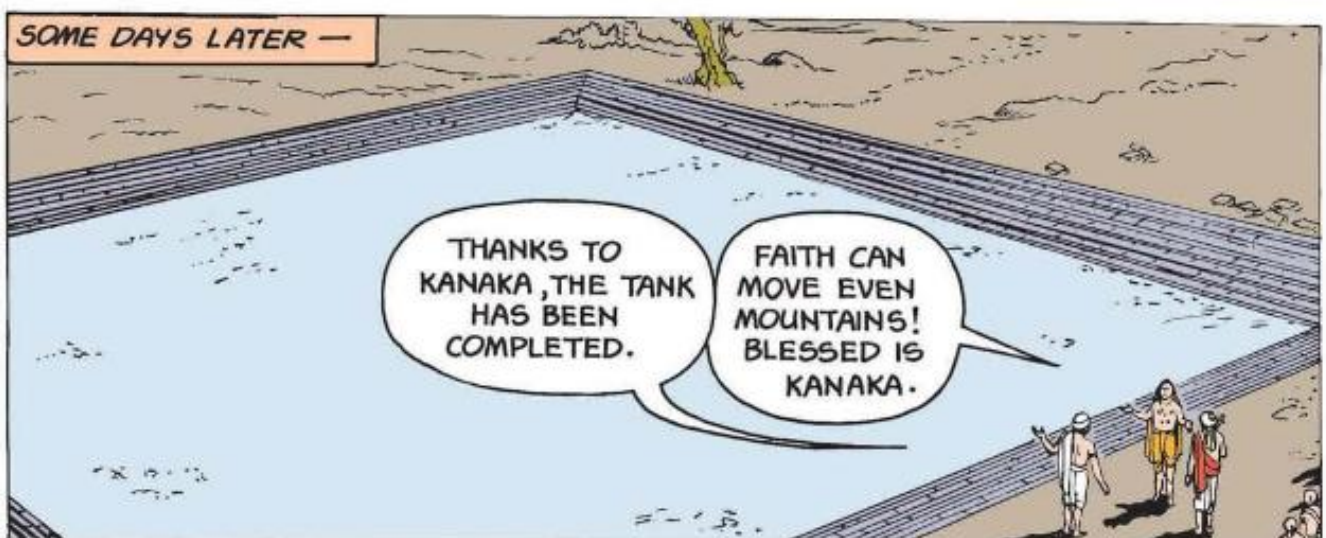
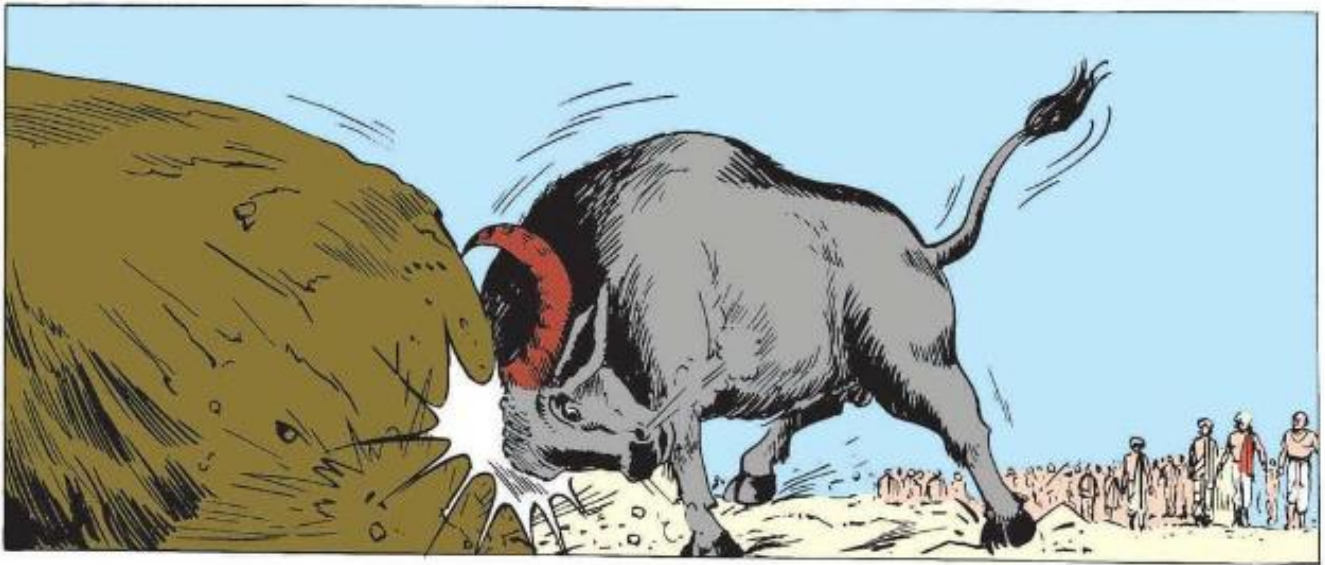
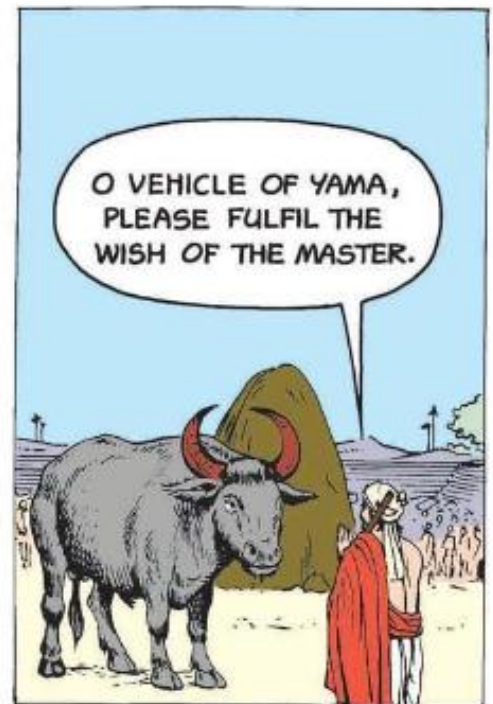
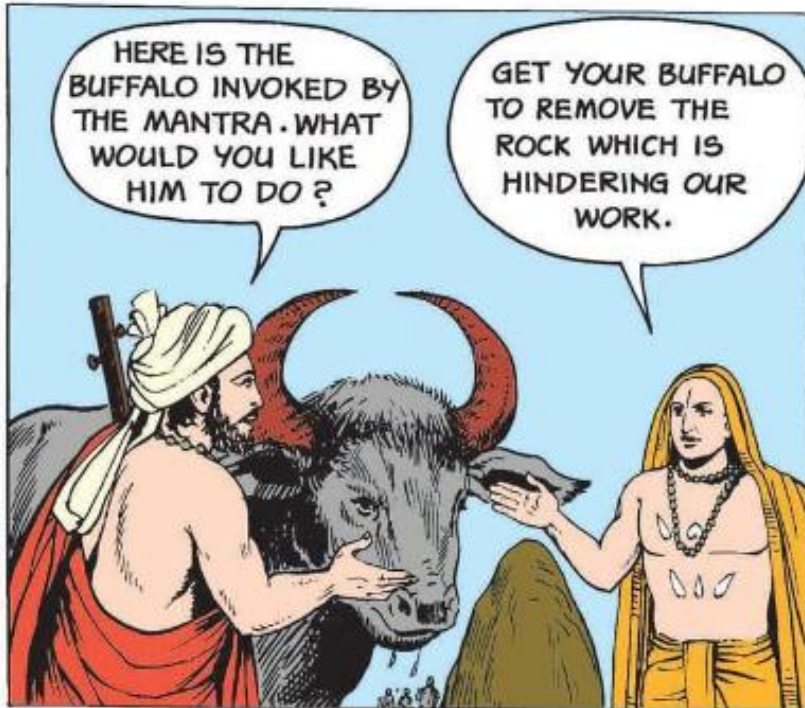


A CROWD COLLECTED AROUND KANAKADASA.

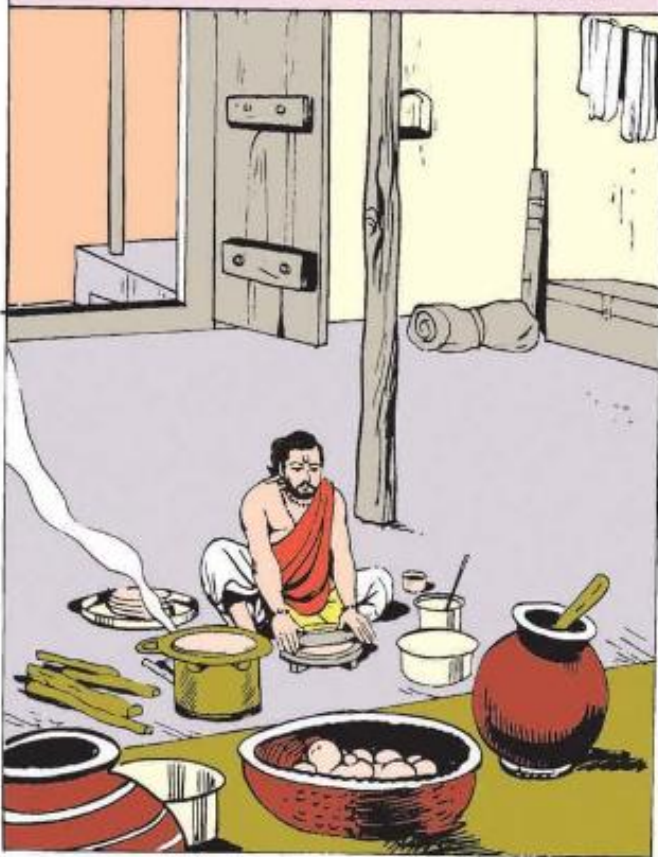


SUDDENLY A BUFFALO APPEARED.





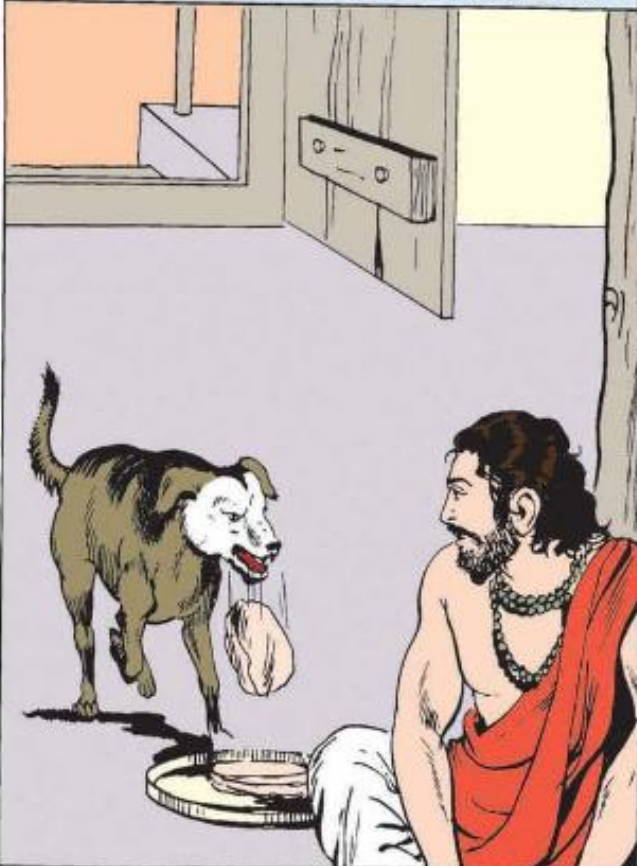
ONE DAY WHEN KANAKA WAS COOKING...



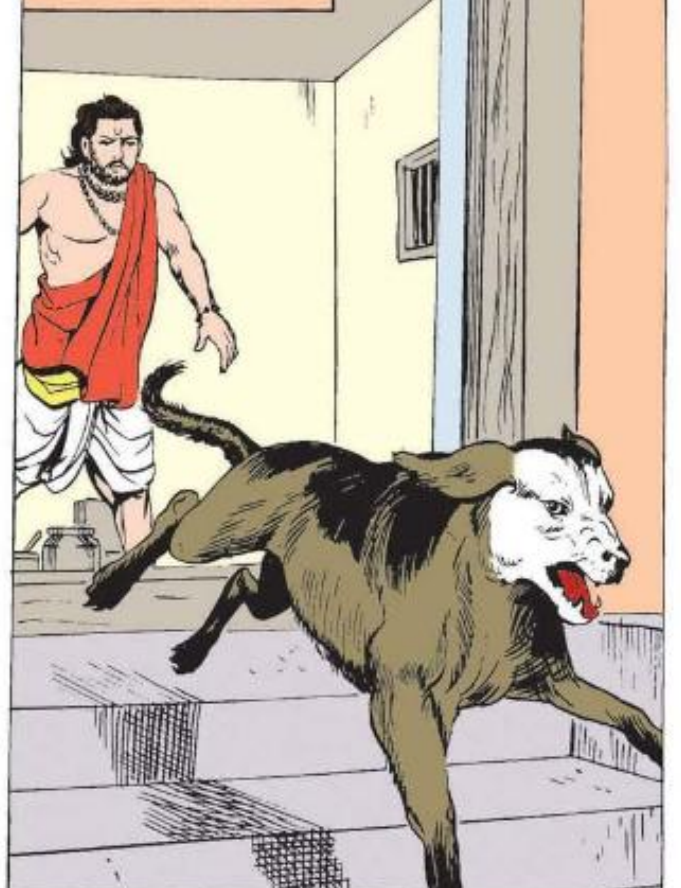
... A STREET DOG CAME IN AND PICKED UP A ROTI.*



WHEN KANAKA TURNED SUDDENLY, THE FRIGHTENED DOG DROPPED THE ROTI...



...AND RAN OUT.



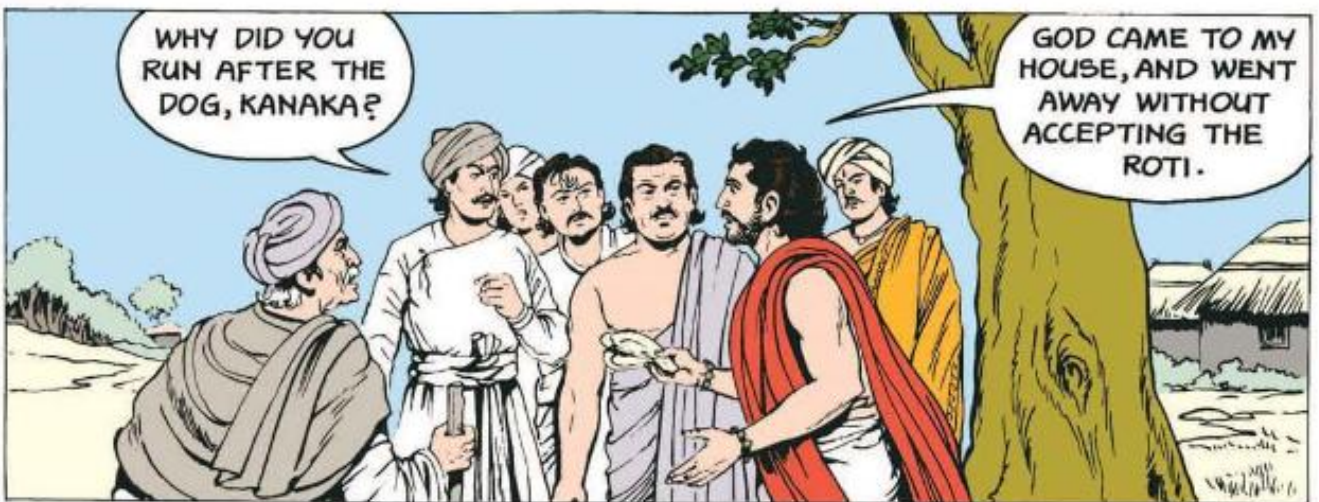
KANAKA RAN AFTER THE DOG, WHILE THE PEOPLE ON THE STREET WATCHED THE STRANGE SIGHT.

COME BACK AND TAKE THIS.



WHY DID YOU RUN AFTER THE DOG, KANAKA?

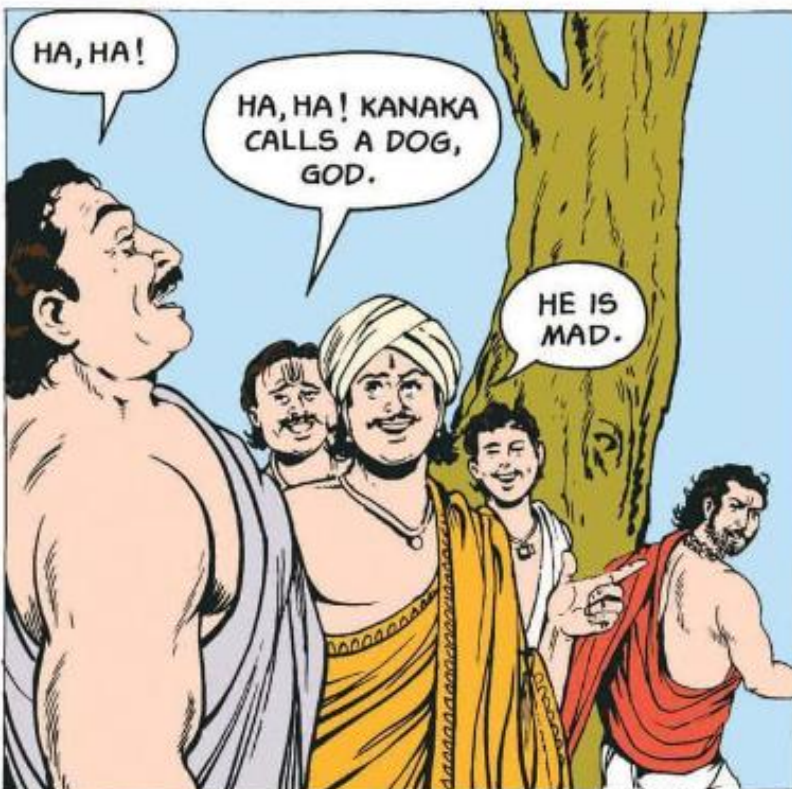
GOD CAME TO MY HOUSE, AND WENT AWAY WITHOUT ACCEPTING THE ROTI.



HA, HA!

HA, HA! KANAKA CALLS A DOG, GOD.

HE IS MAD.

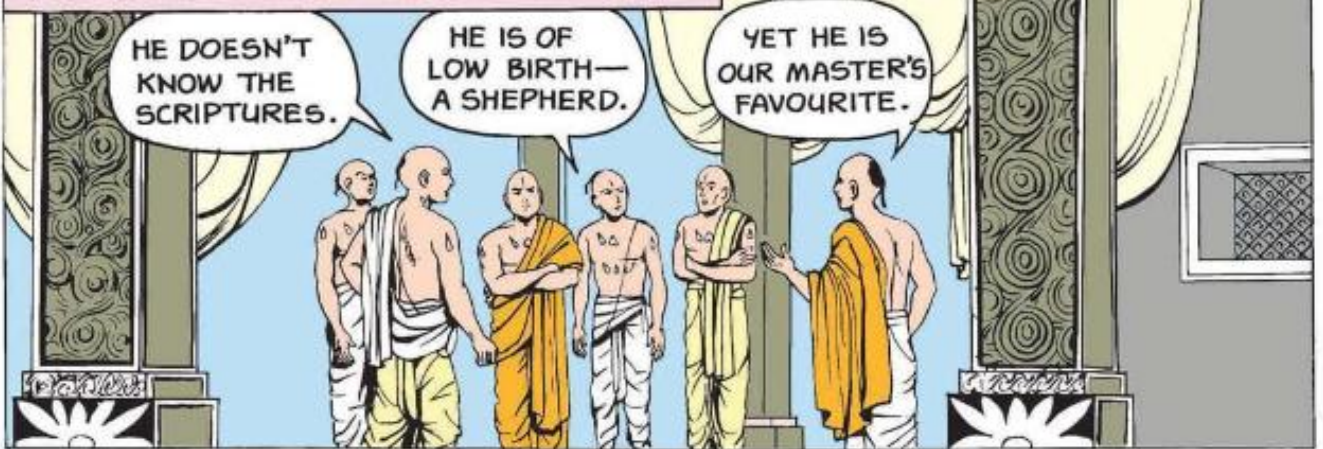


BUT VYASATEERTHA UNDERSTOOD.

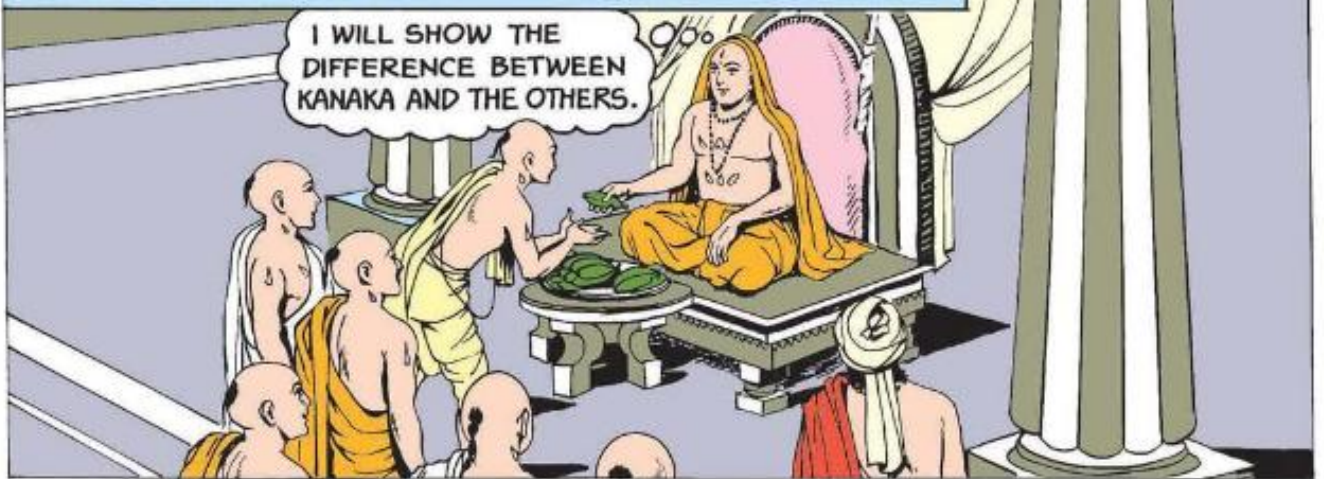
KANAKA SEES GOD EVERYWHERE AND IN EVERYTHING. HE IS A TRUE WORSHIPPER.



KANAKA BECAME THE FAVOURITE DISCIPLE OF VYASATEERTHA. THE OTHER DISCIPLES SOON BECAME JEALOUS OF HIM.



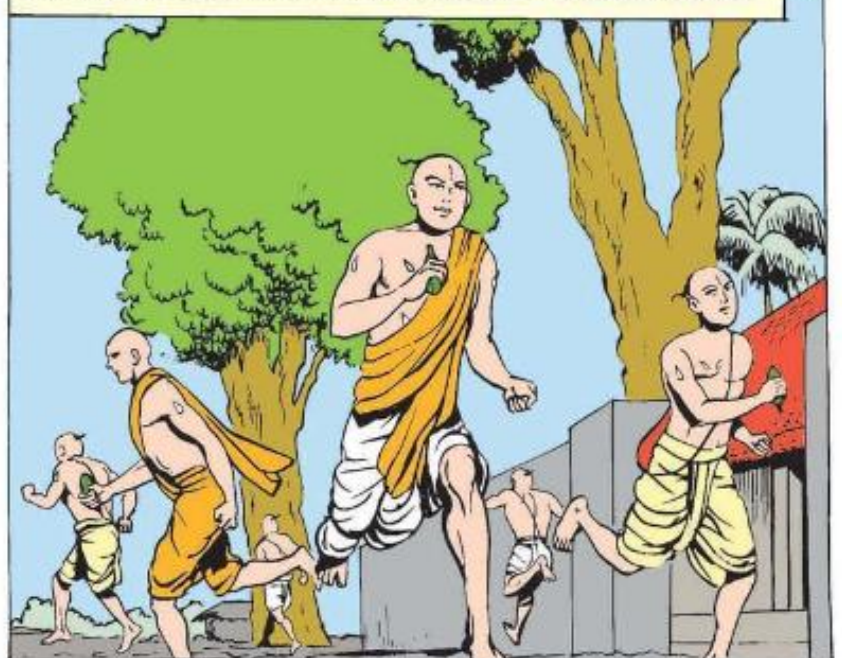
VYASATEERTHA WAS AWARE OF HOW HIS DISCIPLES FELT. HE CALLED THEM AND GAVE THEM EACH A BANANA.

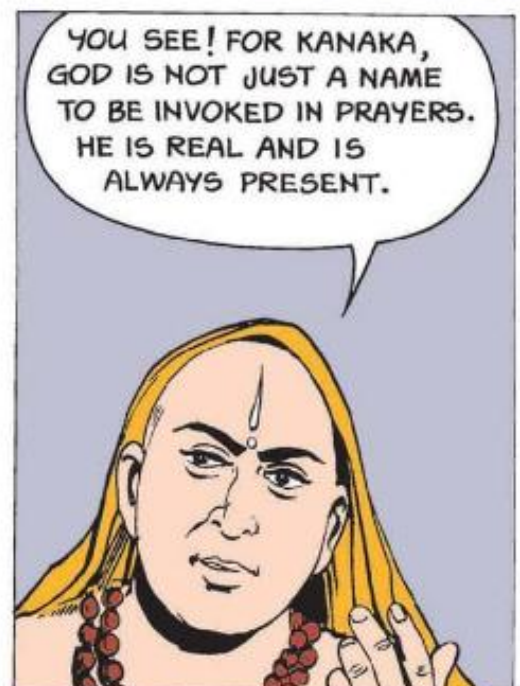
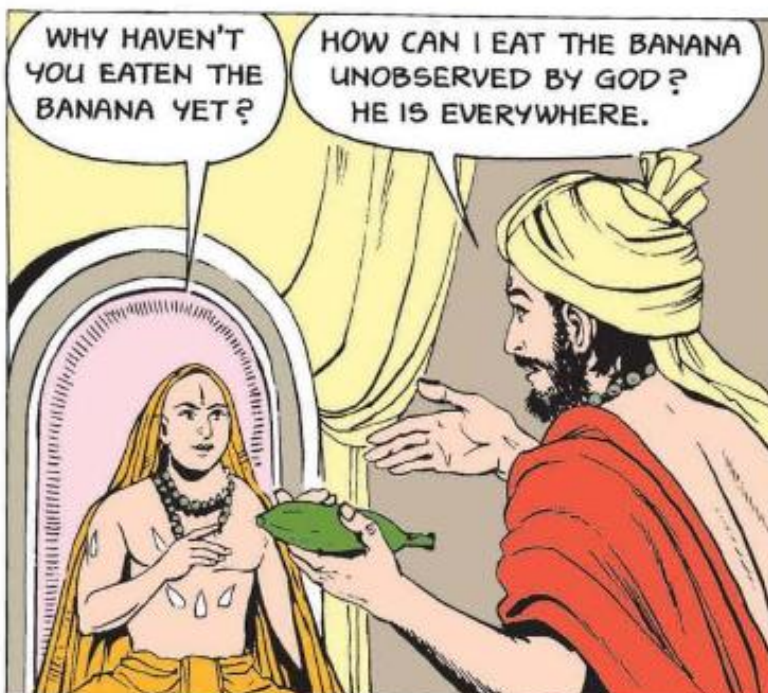
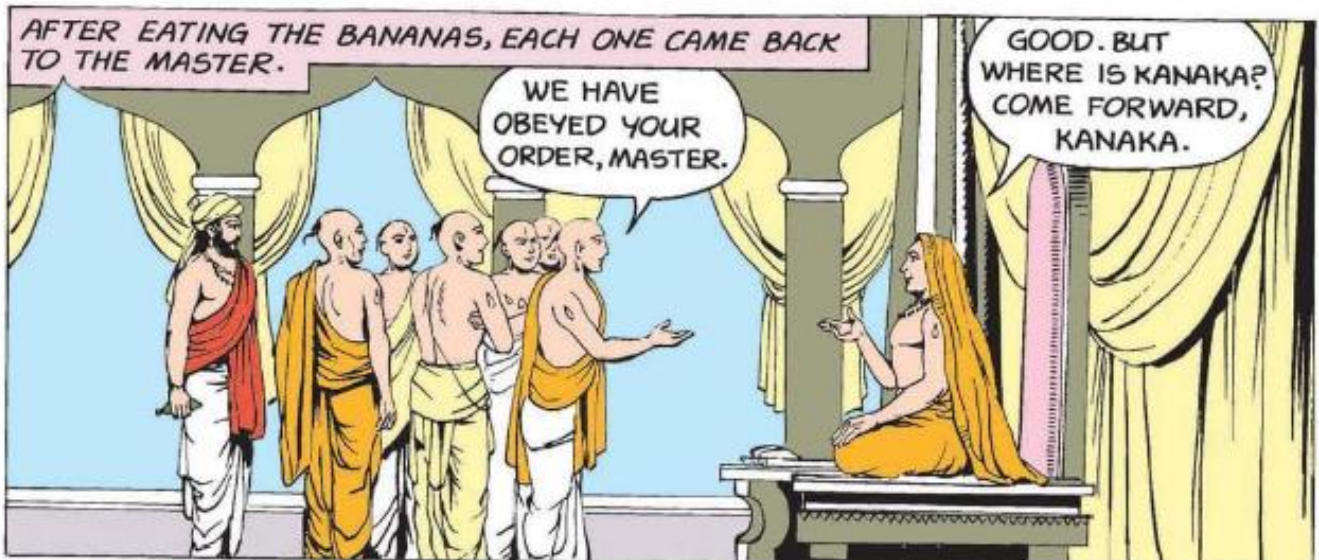
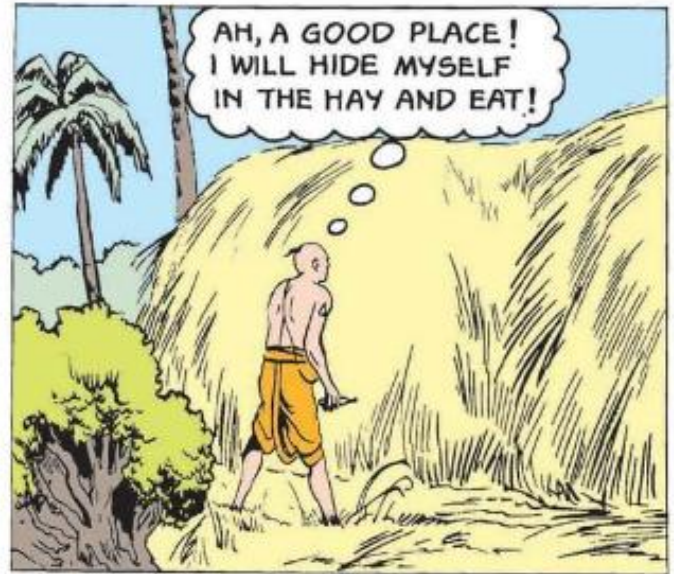
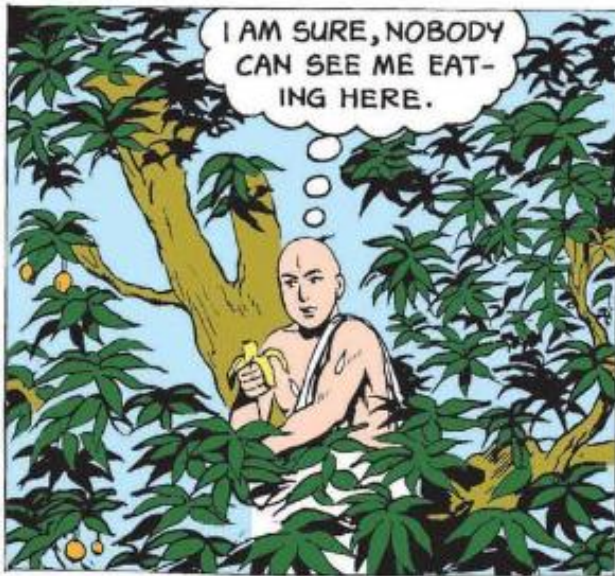


GO TO SOME SECLUDED SPOT AND EAT THIS SACRED BANANA, UNOBSERVED BY ANYONE.

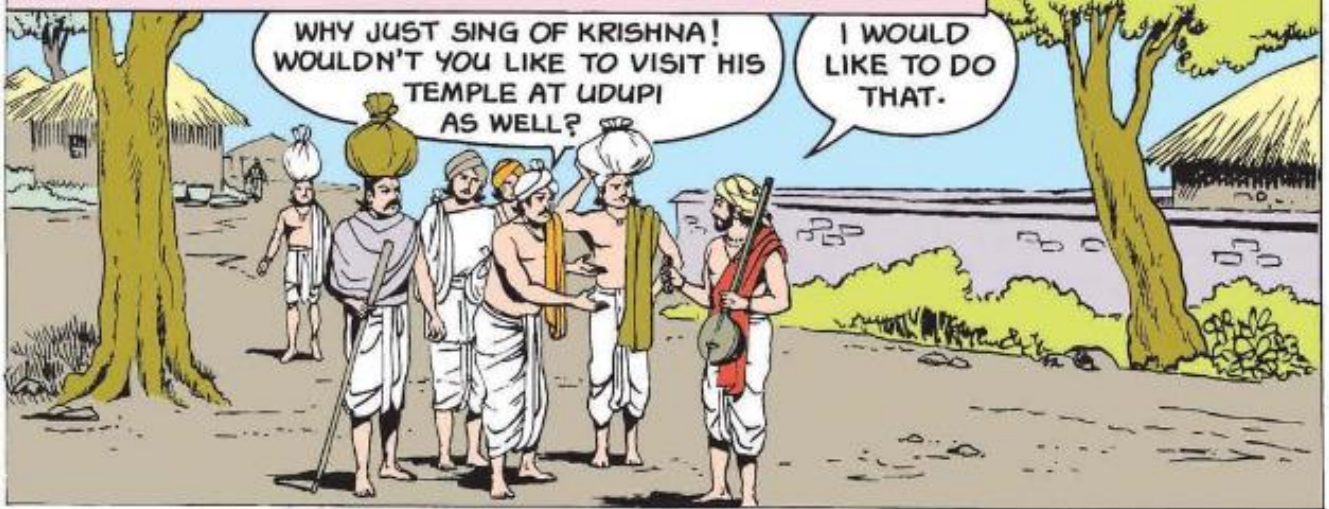


HIS DISCIPLES RAN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.





SOON AFTER THIS INCIDENT, KANAKA LEFT HIS GURU AND STARTED ROAMING FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE SINGING ABOUT THE GLORY OF GOD. ONE DAY, HE MET A GROUP OF PILGRIMS WHO WERE ON THEIR WAY TO UDUPI.



WHEN HE REACHED THE TEMPLE—



KANAKA WENT BEHIND THE TEMPLE.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, KRISHNA! CAN'T YOU HEAR MY PLEAS?



A STRANGE THING HAPPENED IN THE SANCTUM WHERE SHRI VADIRAJA TEERTHA, THE ACHARYA*, WAS WORSHIPPING THE LORD.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? THE LORD'S IMAGE HAS TURNED AROUND!



THE ACHARYA HURRIED TO THE BACK OF THE TEMPLE AND SAW AN OPENING IN THE WALL THROUGH WHICH KANAKA WAS ABLE TO HAVE A GLIMPSE OF THE DEITY.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART!

KRISHNA, YOU ARE KIND AND MERCIFUL.



LATER, A WINDOW WAS BUILT WHERE THE OPENING HAD APPEARED. TO THIS DAY, DEVOTEES VISITING UDUPI HAVE A GLIMPSE OF THE LORD THROUGH THE WINDOW WHICH HAS BECOME FAMOUS AS "KANAKA'S WINDOW". HIS DEVOTIONAL SONGS CONTINUE TO BE SUNG ALL OVER KARNATAKA THOUGH FOUR HUNDRED YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE HE DIED.